

McGhee

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BRITISH CAMPAIGNS IN THE  
NEARER EAST



# BRITISH CAMPAIGNS IN THE NEARER EAST

1914—1918

*From the Outbreak of War with  
Turkey to the Taking of Jerusalem*

WITH 19 MAPS AND PLANS

BY

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## PREFACE

THOUGH on a minor scale as compared with the gigantic conflicts on the Western and Eastern main fronts in Europe, the campaigns in the Nearer East during the period covered by the following pages—November, 1914, to January, 1918—not only represent what would in any other war have been considered operations of the first moment, but afford lessons in campaigning of the greatest interest and the highest value. Some severe reverses sustained by British arms darken this record. On the other hand, it is not less illumined by brilliant military triumphs. Chequered as the story is, its background is consistent devotion and steady valour. In telling it I have had no purpose to serve save truth. The narration is based upon official records. No fact has been glossed, and no statement advanced as fact which is doubtful. Some opinions expressed may be open to debate, as most opinions are, but the proofs are there and the reader may judge for himself. My claim is to have written without bias.

Since the events recorded are of far-reaching political importance, I have thought it advisable to begin with a rapid sketch of the origin, progress and influence of German policy in Turkey. This appeared necessary both as assisting to understand the part played by the

## PREFACE

Turkish Empire in the War, and how and why that Empire was dragged into the struggle.

The narrative covers the British campaigns in Gallipoli, the Balkans, Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Expedition to Gallipoli is here dealt with largely from the aspect of its strategy.

E. D.

LONDON, 1918.

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## CHAPTER I

### GERMAN "PENETRATION" IN TURKEY

Origin of Germany's Eastern policy—The Crisis of 1875 and the troubles in the Balkans—Alliance with Austria a sequel of the Russo-Turkish War—The Real Eastern Question—German "Reforms" in Turkey—Their undermining tendency—Financial dependence on Berlin—The Bagdad railway scheme—Its military character—Armenian massacres a disguise of German projects—The remodeling of the Turkish Army—Formation of the Balkan League—Germany and the Young Turk movement—The lure of Egypt—Dethronement of Abdul Hamid and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria—Outbreak of the Balkan War—Failure of German military changes—Independence of the Turkish Empire sapped.

EARLY in 1875 the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg was granted by his Government an absence on leave. To fill his place for the time there was sent from Berlin Herr von Radowitz, a high official of the German Foreign Office, believed to be in the confidence of Bismarck. Intended outwardly to signify the suspension of any business of moment, since it would naturally be inferred that the accredited Ambassador would be the channel of important communications, these changes covered a special and secret mission.

Herr von Radowitz, it is now known, went to St. Petersburg in order to suggest to the Tsar, Alexander II, a Russo-German pact. The main conditions proposed were on the one side a free hand for Germany in Western Europe; on the other a free hand for Russia in the Nearer and Farther East. Each Power was on this basis mutually to support the policy of the other.

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Every precaution was taken to veil this *démarche* because at that date, in accordance with a plan drawn up by the German General Staff, Bismarck had in contemplation a renewal of the war with France.

The reasons for the intention can be briefly stated. Bismarck had favoured the establishment of the French Republic. He believed that form of government would keep France politically feeble. But following the rapid liquidation of the War Indemnity of 5,000 millions of francs imposed upon France by Prussia under the Treaty of Frankfort in 1871—the indemnity had been paid off in a few months—France had in 1875 recovered so signally from the disasters of the War of 1870–71, that there then came before the Chambers at Paris the project of forming the cadres for a reconstitution of the French Army on a footing of universal conscription.

For Germany the project was of grave omen. On the one hand the plans for a renewed attack upon France had already been drawn out. On the other the French scheme, perfectly within the rights of the Republic as a sovereign State, and necessary in view of the armaments of Germany, infringed no clause of the Frankfort compact.

As usual, the pretext for the contemplated fresh outbreak of hostilities was remote from the true motive. More important to Germany, however, than a pretext, true or false, was the disposition of Russia and of Great Britain. Neither of those Powers, it was evident, could, without misgiving, view the rise of the German Empire, recently reconstituted under the headship of Prussia, to a situation of unchallengeable military supremacy in Europe, and the less so because of the now known principles of Prussian polity. Towards that result the ruin and depression of France would be a long step.

Germany, as yet without allies, was not prepared for a war which might involve Great Britain and Russia. German diplomacy, therefore, was at this date exerted to foment mutual distrust between Great Britain and Russia in regard alike to affairs in Turkey, Persia and India.

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Their mutual distrust was relied upon to keep them from acting together even in matters of common interest. The interest of each, however, in the strength and security of France as a counterpoise to the ambitions of the German Empire was too palpable to be ignored.

Sweeping aside other considerations, the Tsar Alexander rejected the Radowitz proposal. His rejection was final.

It remained to test British opinion. If Great Britain could be counted upon to stand aside, war might still be risked, though the attitude of Russia remained in doubt. Accordingly, when he had returned after the non-success of his St. Petersburg mission, Radowitz was made the channel of a calculated indiscretion to the French Ambassador at Berlin, M. de Gontaut-Biron. By apparent inadvertence he blurted out the plan of intended aggression. Assuming that France was re-arming for the purpose of revenge, Radowitz, in the course of a seemingly informal and private conversation, asserted that neither on political, philosophical, nor Christian grounds could Germany wait to re-attack until France had formed alliances which would aid her scheme. This incident, reported forthwith to the French Government, was without delay disclosed by the French Ambassador in London to the British Government and the disclosure led to a public declaration by the Earl of Derby, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Though guarded in its terms, the tenour and meaning of the declaration were unmistakable. Great Britain would not stand aside. There were in German newspapers outbursts of anger inspired from the Wilhelmstrasse. None the less, what is now known as "the Crisis of 1875" was averted.

That crisis marks the starting point of German "penetration" in Turkey. Since along the road contemplated Germany dared not then venture, it became necessary to find another avenue of expansion, and it became necessary because such expansion is the vital principle of a militarist empire. In an empire of that type, founded upon the supremacy of force, the prestige

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of the governing class rests upon success in arms, and upon material prosperity attributed to success in arms. Intrigue is one form of preparation for war.

Hardly had the commotion caused by the Radowitz incident died down when—in August, 1875—a revolt broke out in the then Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The outrages which marked the Turkish measures of repression of course brought Russia to the forefront. At Constantinople, Ignatieff, the Russian Ambassador, presented protests, and, these being without avail, passed to threats. Then, on the initiative of Austria, it was proposed, and to all appearance agreed, that the Great Powers in concert should instruct their Ambassadors at Constantinople to draw up a scheme for the reform and government of the revolted provinces, and press its acceptance upon the Divan. Despite protracted discussions at Constantinople and an International Consular Inquiry on the spot, the scheme came to nothing. Whenever an agreement seemed on the point of being reached the German Ambassador announced his dissent.

The cause of this procrastination lay partly in the fact that meanwhile there had taken place in the Turkish capital two of those palace revolutions which have been a feature of the later history and decline of the House of Osman. In the first, Abdul Aziz had been dethroned and Murad V set up. In the second, Murad, after a troubled reign of three months, was in turn deposed in favour of Abdul Hamid. These agitations had been accompanied by a blowing up of the fires of Mussulman fanaticism. In 1876, the Balkan trouble had spread in an aggravated form to Bulgaria.

The inner meaning of these events, little apprehended at the time, is now beyond doubt. Abdul Hamid ascended the throne as the *protégé* of Germany. It was the policy of Germany, by embroiling Turkey with Russia, to accentuate by that means antagonism between Russia and Great Britain. But while that of itself was an important point, having regard to the designs against France, postponed but not surrendered, another aim

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was to gain stronger influence in the counsels of the Porte. Weakened by war, the Turkish Empire would have the more call for aid, diplomatic and financial. Germany was to be the friend in need. That Turkey would be beaten in the now unavoidable conflict with Russia was probable. More than ever Abdul Hamid would look for support towards Berlin.

At the same time, since no active assertion of Russian influence in the Balkans could take place without awakening the fears and jealousies of Austria, this Russo-Turkish conflict could not fail to pave the way for that offensive and defensive alliance between Germany and Austria which was the true corner-stone of Bismarckian policy. The sequel justified Bismarck's moves. In 1879, when the troops of the Tsar had at length arrived within sight of Constantinople, the alliance between Germany and Austria was concluded. From that time the real independence of Austria in foreign affairs ceased.

The growth of German influence in Turkey corresponded with these beginnings.

In form the Turkish sovereignty constituted a theocracy in which, as Padishah and Commander of the Faithful, the Sultan was all-powerful, subject to the review of his Irades by the Sheik-ul-Islam, and the College of Ulemas. With the College lay the function of seeing that no enactment ran counter to the Mohammedan Sacred Law. Any enactment so doing was *ipso facto* void. To Mohammedans this check upon arbitrary rule had a practical value. But it left the Christian and Jewish populations of the Empire without security. A distinction in legal rights based upon difference in religious belief is, however, a cardinal vice in the government of any State. Turkey offered no exception to the rule. On the contrary, this vicious principle had proved to be the parent of a brood of administrative ills. Dealing with Mohammedans and non-Mohammedans on a different footing, the integrity of the Turkish official was sapped by the practice of buying protection which the law denied. By degrees, indeed, the levying of

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irregular exactions from non-Mohammedans had been recognised by the Government, which, pressed by debt, and by the lack of a steady revenue, left its subordinates to look to such exactions as more reliable than their pay. Under these influences the administration had degenerated into a machinery of extortion, varying in shades of badness from place to place and from time to time, but rooted in a principle fatal to public prosperity.

The existence of this political miasma was the real Eastern Question.

In what respects did German influence tend to modify this system? In none. German influence tended to aggravate it. For the leverage worked upon was a professed defence of the Turkish point of view against outside protest and interference. It was no purpose of German policy to strengthen the Turkish Empire as such, and cure its ills. The surest means of hastening Turkish decline, and of reducing the Empire first to covert dependence and then to open vassalage was to confirm for the time being the fatal and paralysing political and administrative vice, and, by appealing to fanaticism, to arrest even the possibility of reform. One of the now best known expedients of German "penetration" was thus to seize upon some movement likely to weaken or disintegrate a State it was designed to absorb, and aid that movement by secret subventions, for of the fanatics and adventurers to whom chiefly such eddies of political activity appeal the first are careless and the second unscrupulous as to the origin of proffered support. This policy now applied to Turkey had preceded the partition of Poland.

German reforms, so called, there were. They took, however, a different direction. To begin with, there was introduced a spy system and secret police on lines already familiar in Central Europe. This, besides harmonising with the Sultan's temperament, opened the way for the employment of *agents provocateurs*, so that fanaticism might always be revived by alleged conspiracies to revolt. In the absence of jealousy of Christian or

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Jewish prosperity and the motive of gain, the common and unofficial Turkish disposition is towards toleration.

A second so-called reform touched finance. The Turkish Government was entertained with the prospect of finding in the German Reichsbank an accommodating and indulgent creditor, and of feeling itself freed from the embarrassments caused by its most reliable revenues being mortgaged to the International Committee of Bondholders.

The third so-called reform concerned the Army. Before the war of 1876-78 with Russia, the Turkish regular army had consisted, on paper, of 170,800 men with 540 guns. In the event of war this force could be raised, also on paper, by the calling out of the first and second redifs (reserves) and by the addition of irregular cavalry and reserve artillery to a total of some 420,000 men. Over and above there were the Bashi-Bazouks, and other irregulars, estimated at 250,000 men. The grand total of 670,000 men, more or less, represented the full military strength of the State.

The Army was recruited exclusively from the Mohammedan population. It was in accord with the general distinction already alluded to that the Faithful alone should fulfil the duty of bearing arms. Indeed, otherwise, the distinction in the civil administration could not have been upheld. Since, however, only part of the inhabitants of the Empire professed the predominant faith, the exclusion was a great source of military weakness.

After the war with Russia the Turkish Army was deficient in numbers and badly equipped, and for a long time it suited the policy of Germany to leave the Turkish forces in that condition.

The so-called reforms here touched upon were introduced one after another at considerable yet calculated intervals. It was advisable at the outset that Abdul Hamid should be made, thanks to the support of Berlin, to feel secure upon his throne. Next the financial dependence of the Turkish Government had so far to be assured that the yoke could not readily be shaken off.

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Only then was the question of army reform brought forward.

As preliminary to army reform the scheme was promoted of a railway from Constantinople to Bagdad. The commerce of Asia Minor was chiefly carried on by coastwise traffic. Such overland trade as was still transacted between Asia Minor and the Farther East followed the same routes and was carried on by the same means as had been employed for two thousand years. The Turk had been content to levy tolls upon traffic whether by sea or by land. But increasingly, and more especially since the opening of the Suez Canal, commerce with the Farther East had followed the Red Sea route, alike cheaper and more secure. Once it was pointed out, however, in face of this diversion, the Turk was shrewd enough to perceive that the vast distances and primitive transport of his Asiatic Empire constituted a political and military handicap of the gravest kind, and seeing his dominions in Europe now reduced to narrow bounds, he readily lent an ear to suggestions which, by apparently strengthening his power in Asia, promised further to secure what was left of it in Europe by rendering the Empire as a whole more capable of defence.

For such an undertaking as a trans-continental railway the resources of the Turkish treasury were, of course, hopelessly inadequate, but a German company came forward with an offer to provide the capital. All that was asked of the Turkish Government was a guarantee of the interest on the outlay as the railroad was laid down. In the autumn of 1898 the German Kaiser paid a State visit to Constantinople, sailing up the Dardanelles in his yacht *Hohenzollern*. After that visit the preliminaries were settled without much ado. The concession, embodied in an Imperial firman, provided that for every completed kilometre of line the Porte should pay or make up in interest 14,000 marks per annum. Connected with the line from Pera, the railroad was to run to Bagdad by way of Aleppo, Nisibin, and Mosul. In due course the line was to be carried down from

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Bagdad to Basra. From that place, the proposed terminus on the Persian Gulf, the estuary of the Euphrates is navigable by moderate sized ocean-going steamers.

Commercially the line had few prospects, and the military character of the scheme for all immediate purposes was evident from its trace. Ignoring the ancient trade routes, it was at one and the same time to link up Constantinople with Syria, with the districts bordering upon the Caucasus, with the Persian frontier, and finally with Mesopotamia. These were military needs.

It very speedily became known that the German company which had fathered the undertaking was backed by the Deutsche Bank. The Deutsche Bank was, for all practical purposes, the German Government projected into the field of finance.

About this time, too, there began to appear in Germany the publications, afterwards numerous and popular, advocating a Greater Germany extending from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf. Writers and speakers drew attention to the potential wealth of Mesopotamia, a tract once as fertile as any on the globe, and only needing a reconstruction of the ancient irrigation works once more to convert its swamps and wastes into fruitful soil.

To such a project in itself no objection could be offered. But a scheme which, as a plan of peaceable settlement, could have aroused no opposition wore a different aspect as a probable extension into the Nearer East of the polity which had made the German people a standing army, and the German Empire an armed camp.

The aspiration of a German Empire comprising as dependent States Austria-Hungary, the Kingdoms of the Balkan Peninsula, and the Turkish Empire was by no means new. That it was believed in by the elder von Moltke, and entertained as ultimately practicable by Bismarck is not in doubt. Exact information regarding the Turkish Empire had long been collected for the

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archives at Berlin. Military possibilities had been gone into in detail. It was in association with them that the project of a main line strategical railway had been mapped out. The surveys, when the project had taken shape, were made by German military engineers. Ostensibly they were employees of the new company, or in the Turkish service ; actually they were the pioneers of the German Army.

Diplomatic difficulties were foreseen, for the essentially military character of this railroad could escape no attentive eye. How were the difficulties forestalled ? The first of the massacres of Christians in Armenia took place in 1896. Marking at once a defiance of Russia and of the Western Powers, these atrocities stirred up Mussulman fanaticism afresh, and diverted the attention of the world from the real impending issue.

The atrocities, however, had another purpose, and one more important. The railroad project having been launched, the way was cleared for the proposed reorganisation of the Turkish Army on the German model. With many Turks that professed reform remained a subject of some delicacy, certain to arouse suspicions and strong jealousies. But the bad odour into which, by the Armenian massacres, Abdul Hamid had been brought, not alone in Russia and Western Europe, but in the United States, furnished a plausible pretext for urging the apparently best of all means of self-protection—a Turkish army that could defy attack. That the child unborn should be cut out of its mother's womb in Armenia, and hapless and unoffending peasants done to death with every circumstance of ferocity in order to promote a policy and advance an ambition may at the time have appeared incredible, but history has to lay the infamy at the doors of its authors.

In these circumstances the plan of army reform was accepted, and under the cloak of Pan-Islamism the most decisive step so far was taken to destroy Turkish independence. At the same time, the Armenian troubles helped to keep the army reform proposal as much as

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possible in the background. The arrival at Constantinople of General Liman von Sanders at the head of a Commission of German officers attracted little attention.

Hitherto the Turkish Army had consisted of corps based on the various vilayets. Before the war with Russia there were twenty of these provincial governments. They had been reduced owing to that war to fifteen, for the Empire had lost a fourth of its territory, and more than a fourth of its population. Of the corps some were fit for service in the field; most were not. The first procedure therefore was to create divisions on the European plan, and to group these bodies round certain strategical bases of supply. The chief bases were Constantinople (four divisions), Damascus (four divisions), Erzingan (three divisions), Mosul (one division), Bagdad (one division), plus the two divisions employed, one in Arabia and the other at Adrianople.

After this initiation the army administration was step by step mapped out on German lines. That characteristic feature of the German system, periodical inspections, was introduced. The syllabus of training was equally German, and although the Turkish conscript was set to learn a number of things entirely foreign to him, it was apparently never doubted that he would as a fighting man be raised in the scale of efficiency. As time went on the number of German officers attached to the Turkish Army increased. The engineering branch of the service indeed passed almost entirely into their hands. In these matters the adviser of the Turkish Government was General von der Goltz. He had seen service in the war of 1870-71, and he was an accepted German authority on strategy and tactics.

Seemingly the policy of penetration was prospering. There were, nevertheless, two disturbing symptoms. The Balkan States, concluding that this reorganisation of the Turkish Army boded ill, both increased their armaments and formed a League. Next, many Turks had misgivings. Among them was Abdul Hamid

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himself. He had begun to find German control irksome. On their part the German Government equally distrusted the Sultan, for it is the mark of a policy without scruple to discard its instruments when they have served its turn. "Abdul the Damned" had assisted the policy of penetration; he was not to be allowed to stand in the way of it. The "Young Turk" movement, therefore, began to be heard of, and Abdul and the "Old Turks" became the objects of an alleged revolutionary agitation. Two then obscure officials in the Turkish service at Salonica, Enver and Talaat, adventurers with a talent for intrigue, set on foot the Committee of Union and Progress. The Committee successfully defied Abdul and his secret police, because his secret police were in this matter not trustworthy. German policy played the one party off against the other.

The chief grievance held up by the Young Turks was the British occupation of Egypt, which, since 1882, had reached a prosperity in glaring contrast with any other part of the nominal Turkish Empire. This, it was asserted, lowered the prestige of Islam. The cause of the contrast unquestionably was that under British administration the fatal vice of Turkish rule had given place to legal equality. The fellah in Egypt now tilled his fields in the assurance that he would reap the fruits of his labours. But, instead of ascribing the prosperity of Egypt to its true cause, the Young Turks looked only to the millions sterling a year which they saw might, for a time, be wrung out of the country, and considered themselves robbed by the British occupation. The party's watchword, "national efficiency," derived point from this example of infidel aggression. Not only was it worked upon as a grievance against the Sultan and the Old Turks; it very usefully withdrew attention from other examples of infidel aggression much more grave.

In Egypt meanwhile intrigue was at work promoting a so-called National Party, whose professed aim was independence. Thus at Constantinople the plot was to hand Egypt back to the Turks; at Cairo to expel the

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Turk and every other intruder. With the Cairo movement the Khedive, Abbas Hilmi, was an undisguised sympathiser. He at Cairo and the Young Turks at Constantinople looked equally to Berlin for support of their respective though conflicting aims.

An event which disconcerted this web of deception was the conclusion, in 1904, of the Anglo-French Entente. Among other effects it freed the Egyptian treasury from mischievous restrictions imposed in the supposed interest of the bondholders, and both allowed of relief of taxation and of the application of larger funds to public works, including the completion of the Nile barrage. For German designs the event was a sharp setback.

It was utilised, however, in Turkey to popularise the so-called Party of Union and Progress, and in 1908 that movement was at last judged to be ripe. Two developments then occurred in rapid succession. At Constantinople a rising of Young Turks drove Abdul Hamid from the throne. At Vienna the Austrian Government, in defiance of the Treaty of Berlin, annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina.

From this time the nominal rulers of Turkey were Enver, created a pasha, and Talaat, raised to the dignity of bey. Owing their elevation to German influence, they were from that very fact its tools.

So far as the Balkan League was concerned these developments changed suspicion into certainty, and in 1910, being then ready, the League attacked. There was confidence at Constantinople among the adherents of the new *régime* that the Germanised Turkish army would be readily victorious. That army turned out a failure. Not in all the five hundred years of Turkish rule in Europe had the forces of the Empire been more decisively beaten. The good native fighting qualities of the Turk were hampered by methods he had not assimilated. Germany could not avert this defeat because she could not openly appear in the struggle without precipitating a European conflict. For that her Government were not yet ready.

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The effects of the policy of penetration were now seen. So thoroughly had the strength of the Turkish Empire been sapped that after this disastrous Balkan War it could no longer stand alone. Germany controlled its finance, its railroads, its army, and its Government. The Great War was not opened until the foundations, at any rate, of a Greater Germany, were believed to have been laid.

## CHAPTER II

### THE INTRIGUES OF AUGUST-NOVEMBER, 1914

Political importance of the Serbo-Greek alliance—The assassination of King George of Greece and the policy of Constantine—Its unconstitutional character—Relations between Constantine and the German Emperor—Repudiation of the Serbo-Greek treaty—The *Goeben* and *Breslau* episode—Enver Pasha and the Germans force the situation—Attacks on Russian Black Sea ports—Effect of German reverses on the West and of Austrian reverses in Russia—Need of a diversion in the Near East—German inducements to the Turks—War declared—Military resources of the Turkish Empire—Advantages and disadvantages to Germany of this extension of the conflict.

GERMAN influence in Turkey having taken the course already outlined, what were the circumstances in which Turkey was, in November, 1914, dragged into the conflict, as it then was, between Germany and Austria on the one side, and France, Great Britain and Russia on the other ?

The first step on the part of the German Government was concerned with the attitude of Greece.

Constantine succeeded his father on the throne of Greece after King George had been assassinated at Salonica at the close of the second Balkan War. The murdered King had been one of the promoters, not only of the Balkan League, but of the Serbo-Greek alliance. Having little confidence in the policy of Ferdinand, King of Bulgaria, who had assumed the title of Tsar, and distrusting alike the new *régime* in Turkey and the designs of Austria, the two States of the Western Balkans at the end of the first Balkan War sought by an alliance mutually to assure themselves.

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But, though in the second Balkan War they had successfully upheld their territorial claims against those of Bulgaria, it was clear that their alliance directly traversed both the aspirations of Austria to control the whole eastern coast of the Adriatic and the still larger ambitions of the German Government. The second Balkan War had proved, too, that Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, acting in concert, formed a formidable Power, and it was evident that if the Serbo-Greek alliance was by effluxion of time allowed to solidify, a heavy bar would be placed, not merely in the way of the expansion of the Central Empires to the south-east, but in the way of that maritime control of the Levant to which they aspired. On the other hand, since if Greece could be detached from this combination the balance would be entirely altered, it was of manifest importance that the Hellenic kingdom should become subservient to German-Austrian aims.

That the assassination of King George was a political crime, and the first blow aimed at the Serbo-Greek compact, hardly admits of doubt, for if the origin of a crime is to be sought for in its motive, an established principle of investigation in matters criminal, the interest of the Central Powers, and especially that of the Government of Germany, in the speedy "removal" of King George is beyond debate. No other interest was or could be promoted by it. The motive of the blow was the more manifest because Constantine, professionally educated in the German Army, was both an out-and-out admirer of the Prussian military system, and had had bestowed upon him, a distinction of which he was vain, the honorary rank of a German Field-Marshal. Not least, he had married the Princess Sophia, sister of the German Kaiser. To the Kaiser and the German Government his personal views were known to run directly counter to his father's policy.

Since, too, he was a man of at best but ordinary endowments, the influence of the Court at Athens after his accession was, under the outward mask of pacific isolation, consistently exerted towards the furtherance

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of German interests. Independently of the influence of Queen Sophia, Constantine's closest and most confidential adviser was Dr. Streit, born at Athens, but the son of German parents.

In the circumstances there appeared to be every assurance that when the time came to give effect to it on a military footing, the Serbo-Greek treaty would be dealt with as of no account. One difficulty alone stood in the way. Constantine was a constitutional ruler. His dynasty had been placed on the Greek throne on the express condition that the Constitution would not be violated, and Great Britain, France and Russia were, under the Treaty which had liberated Greece from Turkish rule, the guardians at once of Greek independence and of Greek popular rights. Not only then was Constantine, as a Constitutional Sovereign, bound to accept the advice of his responsible Ministers chosen by the nation, but to the obstinate rejection of that advice, and the unconstitutional course of following a contrary and personal policy, there was attached the penalty of deposition.

Now the advice tendered to Constantine in August, 1914, by M. Venizelos, then Prime Minister, was that Greece should throw in her lot with the Entente Powers. That, giving effect to the alliance, would have made it in any event most improbable that Serbia, not being isolated, could be overpowered. It would, too, have assured the neutrality of Bulgaria. The ground for the advice tendered by the Greek Prime Minister was that the Turkish Government had already entered upon a systematic persecution and despoilment of the Greek population along the Asia Minor littoral. The plunder thus obtained, then estimated at a total of five hundred millions of francs, was to be used for defraying the costs of Turkish mobilisation in the event of war. Since the Greek population of the towns and districts along the coasts of Asia Minor numbered some three millions, the issue was one of urgency as well as of importance. About a quarter of a million of these Asiatic Greeks, including the wealthiest among them, had been stripped of their

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possessions, and driven forth as exiles to beg their bread.

But while in name the head of the Greek nation and the representative of Greek interests, and content in that capacity to enjoy the state and status of royalty, Constantine had so imperfect a sense of the duties of his position that he rejected the counsel of his Ministers without qualification. Venizelos resigned. The new Cabinet had not the confidence of the Greek Parliament. Yet almost their first act was to repudiate the Serbo-Greek treaty.

On August 4, 1914, the day on which Great Britain declared war, M. Theotokis, the Greek Minister at Berlin, received from the German Emperor a summons to a personal audience. When M. Theotokis entered the Cabinet of the Emperor he found the latter holding in his hand a telegram which he told the Minister had just been sent by Constantine. The purport of the telegram was not disclosed but the Kaiser William dictated to Theotokis a reply in these terms :—

“ The Emperor informs me that an Alliance has to-day been concluded between Germany and Turkey. Bulgaria and Rumania are also taking their stand alongside of Germany. The German warships in the Mediterranean are to join the Turkish Fleet and act together. By this action the King of the Hellenes will see that all the Balkan States have joined Germany in the struggle against Slavism.”

To this reply the Greek Minister added his own report of a conversation which had followed the dictation.

“ In bringing these considerations to the knowledge of your Majesty ” (he wrote), “ the Kaiser asks you—appealing to you as a comrade, as a German Field-Marshal of whom the German Army is proud, and reminding his brother-in-law that Greece kept Kavala thanks to the Kaiser’s support—to mobilise your Army, to place yourself at his

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side, and to march with him hand-in-hand against Slavism and the common enemy. If Greece does not side with Germany there will be a complete breach between Greece and the Empire. The Emperor added: 'What I ask to-day is the execution of what the two Sovereigns have often discussed.' "

As throwing light on the relations of the two rulers, the concluding passage of this note is of some significance. Constantine replied urging that his attitude of ostensible neutrality was the more desirable course. On the following day, August 5, Theotokis had an interview with the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, and in his account of it he stated:—

"Herr von Jagow confirmed, under the seal of absolute secrecy, the conclusion of an Alliance between Turkey and Germany. When I pointed out the dangers to which our geographical situation exposed us, Herr von Jagow replied that he did not think England would act against Greece. M. Theotokis added: 'If we accept the Emperor's appeal, we should, I think, ask for clear definitions as to what he wants us to do, and what he would guarantee us in case of success. My impression is that he would not object to see us extend our territory at the cost of Serbia.' "

From these transactions it is clear that the ostensible neutrality of Constantine, covered by a refusal to fall in with the Kaiser's demands, was intended to destroy the Serbo-Greek alliance, the western bulwark of the Balkans. The destruction of that bulwark was the initial step towards involving Turkey in the war.

Meanwhile, at Constantinople another phase of the comedy was being enacted. On receipt of the news of the outbreak of hostilities the Council of Ministers was called together. As Secretary for War, Enver Pasha proposed that Turkey should declare forthwith on the

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side of Germany and Austria. He found himself in a minority. Next he urged the necessity of a partial mobilisation of the reserves. That was agreed to. The Sultan personally was opposed to hostilities and the majority of the Divan shared his opinion. Negotiations were accordingly set on foot for concluding with the Ambassadors of the Entente Powers a formal agreement of neutrality. While these negotiations went on the tidings came of sweeping German successes in France. As the bulletins arrived—from Berlin—Enver at every successive meeting of the Council showed himself more urgent and aggressive. The shrewder Ministers had their misgivings. The Council, however, was already divided when *Goeben* and *Breslau* steamed up the Dardanelles and dropped anchor before Constantinople. Escaping from the port of Messina in Sicily, these ships had eluded the Allied squadron in the Eastern Mediterranean, how, was never during the War explained. It has been asserted that the Allied squadron was misled by false wireless instructions into believing *Goeben* and *Breslau* would make for Pola. In any event, it did not appear a good beginning for the Allied naval operations in those waters.

The spectacle of two German warships lying off the Golden Horn, one of them, *Goeben*, one of the most powerful units of the German fleet, at once stimulated the Turkish war party and depressed the opposition, for the main point on which the peace advocates had relied was the supremacy of the Entente at sea. With the support of the Sultan they had so far held to their opinions that the neutrality compact was drawn up and awaiting ratification.

In the circumstances Enver Pasha and the German Government realised that they must force the pace. The cruisers of the Turkish fleet had been entrusted to the command of German officers. Either on secret instructions or on their own initiative they attacked Odessa and the Russian Black Sea port of Theodosia. On learning this the Turkish Government was profuse in its apologies. A deputation of Ministers waited on

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the French Ambassador with the offer of an apology to Russia, and of an indemnity to defray damages.

The reply of the Entente Powers was to demand that all German naval and military instructors in the Turkish service must leave Constantinople. The demand was met by evasion. Time was sought to be gained by a counter-proposal that the matter should be referred to the mediation of Italy and the United States. This, considered a subterfuge, was rejected and the original demand insisted upon. The Divan was now in a difficulty. To accede meant war with Germany and Austria; to refuse, war with the Entente. After a prolonged and stormy meeting, the Council, swayed by Enver and Talaat, decided by a majority for refusal. Four of the Ministers, Djavid Bey, the most influential advocate of a peace policy, Mahmud Pasha, Oskam Effendi, and Boustam Effendi, forthwith resigned. The Ambassadors of the Entente Powers applied for their passports, and on November 1 they left Constantinople.

The date, November 1, on which Turkey was brought into the War has a certain import: the attack upon Odessa had only taken place some days previously. For the meaning of this hurry it is necessary to allude to events in other parts of Europe. If the question be put whether it was intended at the beginning of August, 1914, forthwith to drag Turkey into the conflict, the answer must be in the negative. Had the campaign in the West gone as at the outset it was believed in Berlin it would go; had France been speedily crushed, and Russia, held in the meanwhile by Austria, been speedily crushed in turn, then, the "friendly neutrality" of Greece assured, there would have been no necessity for Turkish assistance. A presumably victorious Germany would indeed have derived all the greater advantage from a Turkish Empire unexhausted by war. The still untapped resources of Turkey would have been available for assault upon the British position in Egypt and India, while the scheme of penetration in Turkey would have derived impetus, and completion from enhanced German prestige. In short, all the

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considerations were against involving Turkey prematurely, and none, in August, 1914, in favour of that course.

By the end of October, however, the prospects had materially changed. The German expedition into France had suffered disaster on the Marne, and the Austrian first line armies had met with defeat. The remains of one Austrian army had already laid down its arms at Lemberg; the wreck of the other was cooped up in Przemyśl. The first battle of Ypres had also been entered upon, and though not yet concluded had already been lost. In view also of the great German-Austrian reverse on the Vistula it had become urgent to divert as much as possible of the Russian strength from the main Eastern front, to stir up trouble for the British in the East, and not least to cut the connection between Great Britain and India through Egypt, and prevent that country from being used as a base for the transport of troops or supplies from Australia. To involve Turkey in the War meant a menace at once to the Anglo-Persian oil-fields at the head of the Persian Gulf, and to the oil-fields of the Caucasus. It meant, of course, also the closing of the Dardanelles, and the cutting of the shortest route to Russia to and from the West, seeing that the Baltic route was now barred. As an inducement, Germany could offer two apparently rich prizes—Egypt and the oil-fields of the Caucasus, once also in Turkish hands and now lost, and the source, like Egypt, of tempting wealth. Since, further, notwithstanding the Balkan War, there was a conviction among many Turks that, with the aid of German military science, these dazzling prospects would infallibly be realised, it is hardly surprising that, stimulated by cupidity, dreams of a great revival of Turkish power swept away considerations of prudence.

Essentially the bringing of Turkey into the conflict in November, 1914, was on the part of the German Government a diversion dictated by necessity. For one thing, the railway to Bagdad had not been completed. The sections were not yet linked up. For another,

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Turkey was still feeling the effects alike of the Balkan and of the Italian wars.

What military advantages did Germany derive from this diversion ?

A common impression regarding the Turkish Empire is that of homogeneity. All the subjects of Turkey have often been roughly classed as Turks. But of the characteristics of the dominions under Turkish rule none has been more marked than the diversity of race and language. That this was the case in Europe was well known. It furnished indeed a main reason for the policy of expelling the Turk from Europe. Not less was it marked throughout Turkey-in-Asia. In Asia Minor the non-Turkish population of Armenians, Kurds, Greeks, Jews, Syrians and Arabs formed the great majority. The followers of Osman, settled for the most part in Anatolia, became the progenitors of the hardy peasantry of that region, and from the provinces bordering on the southern shores of the Black Sea the Turkish armies had always been chiefly recruited. Those provinces formed the heart of the Empire. Armenians, Greeks, and Jews continued to be unreconciled to Turkish rule on religious as well as on political grounds. The Arab opposed it on grounds of race ; the Syrian because of its exactions. Over the wild tribes of the Kurdish highlands Turkish dominion had remained shadowy, and on the farther confines of the Empire, the region of the Lower Euphrates, the western shores of the Persian Gulf, and southern Arabia the imperium of the Turk was of relatively recent date, going back no farther than the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The most powerful because the most constantly operative force making for homogeneity is a sound administration and equal laws. Where there is a diversity of peoples it promotes intercourse, creates common interests, and leads in time to the assimilation of the ruling race with the subject populations. The result is the gradual evolution of stability and strength. Turkish administration, however, instead of favouring

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the fusion of nationalities, opposed the process as the easier means of maintaining supremacy. From the subject populations the Turk remained distinct—an official and military caste. As a peasant cultivator he was simple and frugal ; as an official he had proved himself venal and greedy. His dominion was steadily ruinous.

Looking at these facts, the advantages immediately derived by Germany from the diversion were first the closing of the Black Sea route ; secondly, the obligation thrown upon Russia of dispatching a strong force into the Caucasus, and thirdly the necessity imposed upon Great Britain of taking steps for the effectual defence of Egypt. To that extent Germany added to the embarrassments of her antagonists. And she obtained the command of a force of first-class fighting men which might be raised to a strength of 750,000. In the fifteen divisions of the Turkish regular army filled up to establishment strength there were 300,000 of all arms. Steps were taken at once to embody a further ten divisions. Later the number of divisions was raised to fifty, but on a reduced footing, giving a nominal total of three-quarters of a million men. At no time, however, in the course of the War was a force of that strength simultaneously in the field. Allowing for the supply of losses as they were incurred, it is doubtful if the figure at any time exceeded half a million.

But if these were the advantages there were also disadvantages.

The first was equipment. Much towards the equipment of the Turkish regular army had already been done, especially in the matter of engineering supplies and artillery. After the Balkan War the Turkish Army had practically to be entirely refitted with guns, and according to the ideas then favoured in Germany a considerable proportion were heavy pieces. With the *matériel* turned out at Essen and Skoda, came German officers, instructors, and artificers of various sorts. The outfit was paid for in Turkish bonds accepted as sufficient security, but on advantageous terms, by the Deutsche

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Bank. Obligations incurred by the Turkish Government under that head had apparently reached a total of eight hundred millions of marks. On the outbreak of war it became necessary over and above to equip the Turkish Army on a maximum footing, and to continue the supply. In the earlier part of the struggle that presented no particular difficulty. Germany and Austria combined had then a superiority in the output of war material. But as time went on the drag arising from the campaigns in Turkey became serious.

The second disadvantage was cost. Not only was this a very expensive war in Turkey, but it was equal in scale to that of 1870-71, and times over more prolonged, and it had not been provided for in the plans and estimates before August, 1914. Once more the drag, not greatly felt at first, became towards the end increasingly grave.

A third disadvantage was that the burden of losses in men fell chiefly upon the peasant population of Anatolia and, sweeping away the able-bodied males between the ages of sixteen and fifty, contributed towards the final ruin of the Turkish Empire by drying up the source of its power.

Fourthly, the economic margin in Turkey was narrow, an inevitable effect of Turkish administration. Repeated and severe requisitions for war purposes soon caused the margin to vanish altogether, and left the population, more particularly in Syria, exposed to famine. This again meant a crippling of the Empire's resources.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GERMAN-TURKISH OFFENSIVE

Military purpose of German intrigues in India—Their failure—A threefold plan of operations; winter campaign in the Caucasus; advance to Basra; expedition against Egypt—Scheme of Turkish mobilisation—weak points of Turks' Asiatic Empire—Disasters of the Turkish Caucasus Campaign—Advance on Basra forestalled by the British—Opening of the campaign in Mesopotamia—Its conditions—Turkish reverses—British take Mazera and Kurna—The occupation of Lower Mesopotamia—First attack against Egypt—Effects of British administration—Declaration of a Protectorate—The Turkish concentration at Damascus—Character and strength of the German-Turkish Expedition—Difficulties of the Sinai advance—Battle of Ismailia.

IN September, 1914, the British Government in India knew that agitators, agents of the Turkish Government, were among the tribes of the North-west frontier preaching a Jihad, or Holy War. Occupied by affairs in Turkey, the German Government had, to begin with, given but a secondary attention to the stirring up of discontent with British rule in the Indian peninsula. While the motive of revenge for the setback experienced in 1875 was always present, the influence of German agents, though exerted where and when opportunity offered, was covert and limited. Not until the conclusion of the Anglo-French Entente in 1904 did intrigue begin to take a more active form. It led to the Swadashi movement in Bengal. That died away; nevertheless, the hope of causing Great Britain serious preoccupation through native unrest had not been given up.

Some local troubles were caused on the north-west frontier by the appeal to Mussulman fanaticism, but

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the preaching of a Jihad signally failed. Nor are the reasons for the failure far to seek. Though generally it is repugnant to the mind of a Mussulman that he and his kindred in the faith should be under the rule of infidels, the call to a Holy War must have a genuine basis. The faith must be manifestly in danger. In this instance that was not only not apparent, it was palpably at variance with the facts. The toleration, both practised and enforced, by the British raj and its consistent equality towards nationalities and creeds had created common political interests, and above all the interest in peace and public security. A rule of that kind, once rooted, is not easy to disturb, and a Mussulman is not of necessity a fool.

The chief effect, therefore, of these proceedings had been to put the British Government in India on the alert.

In the meantime, the military measures initiated at Constantinople by Enver Pasha, backed by Liman von Sandars and a Germanised Staff, found the regular Turkish Army, when war broke out, ready to take the field. It was decided to utilise this preparedness. The scheme for the Turkish offensive, characteristic of German methods, provided for a bold and swift stroke against the Russians in the Caucasus, a stroke which would cut off access to the oil-fields; for an expedition simultaneously against Egypt, and, finally, for the dispatch as speedily as possible south from Bagdad of a force which was to occupy Basra and, seizing the works and pipe line of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, deprive the British Navy of this important source of liquid fuel.

In pursuance of this scheme the Turkish regular army had been mobilised into two main bodies. The first, consisting of the 9th, 10th and 11th Corps, strengthened by reserves, was massed at Erzerum. It was further reinforced by the 1st Corps, transported by sea, before war was declared, from Constantinople to Trebizond. All these troops were entrusted to the command of Hassin Izzet Pasha. The second main body massed at

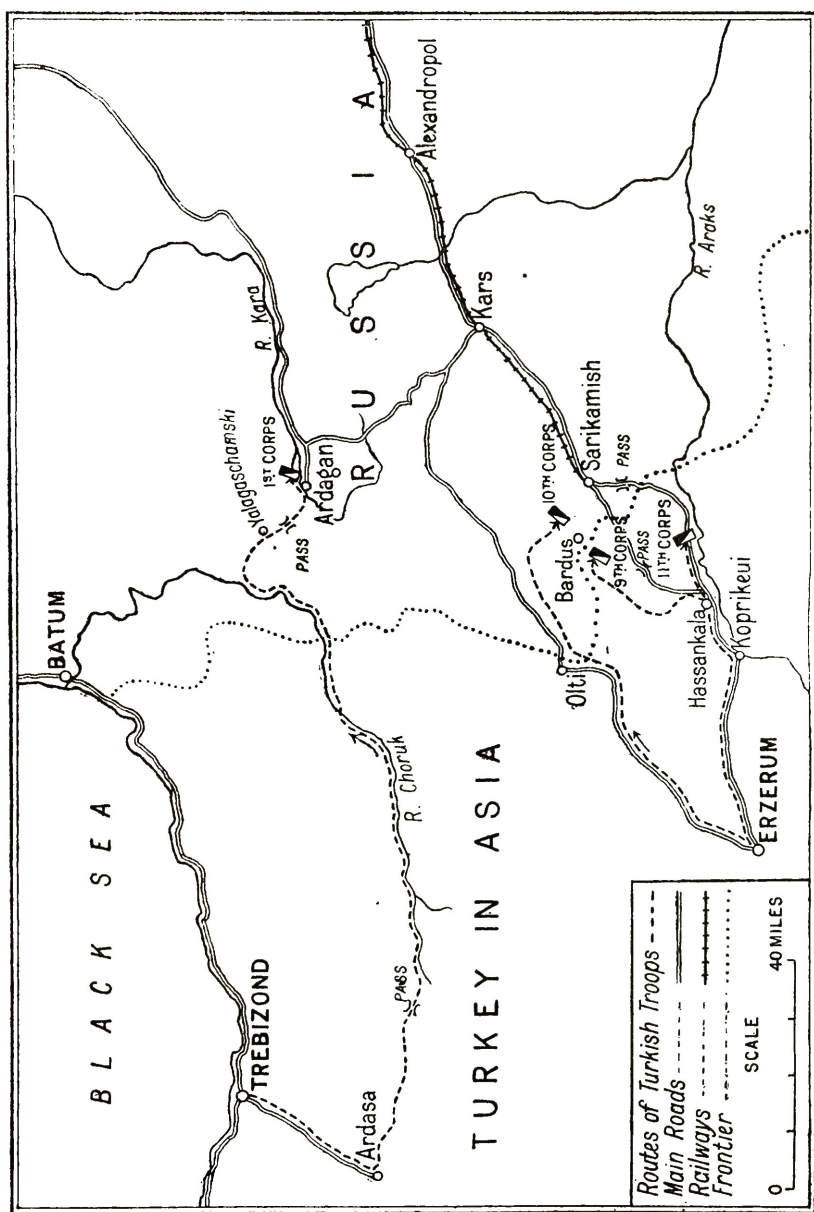
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Damascus under the command of Djemal Pasha, consisted in addition to troops based on that "inspection," of the 4th Corps, sent from Adrianople; of the 12th Corps, transferred from Mosul, and of a division of reserves from Anatolia. In all there were at Damascus some 140,000 men. The total forces destined for operations in the Caucasus amounted to about 200,000. Other corps were retained at Constantinople as a provision against emergencies. Of the troops at Bagdad one division appears to have been deemed presently sufficient for the Basra enterprise. No immediate and serious opposition in that quarter was looked for.

The main difficulty which beset this plan of an offensive was the distances to be covered. In the case of the Caucasus the season of the year was against it, but in the cases of Mesopotamia and Egypt, favourable.

The distances, with the relative paucity of railway and the indifferent roads, revealed the true weakness of Turkey's Asiatic dominions. On the other hand, it was all important from the German point of view to exploit the effect of surprise.

So far, for example, as the Caucasus was concerned, it did not appear unreasonable to suppose that the Russians would not contemplate activities on a large scale until the spring of 1915. Quite possibly, therefore, they might be taken unawares. There is probably not an area in the world where campaigning in mid-winter is more hazardous or involves worse hardships than on the vast and rugged tableland between the Black and the Caspian Seas. Varying in height from 1,500 to 5,000 feet above sea-level, its backbone a chain of lofty peaks, this great upland is in winter swept by violent gales mostly accompanied by heavy falls of snow, which, freezing as it falls, lies many feet thick everywhere, and in the defiles and hollows forms drifts of great depth. The cold is so severe that the natives live during the winter underground, in spacious excavations accommodating both themselves, their cattle and their stores. Outside the towns the country then presents the appearance of a limitless snow-bound solitude. Nowhere is



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there a sign of life, save at rare intervals the smoke from the fires of some underground village.

North of the upland mass the level falls into a mighty hollow extending from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea, the towering peaks of the main range of the Caucasus rising on the farther side of it, a wall of eternal snows. According to geologists, the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea once formed a united sheet of water. In this trough lies Tiflis, the capital of the Russian Caucasus, and along it runs the railway with Baku on the Caspian at one end and Batum on the Black Sea at the other. South of Tiflis there is in the Caucasus plateau a deep rift from north-east to south-west, narrowing as it thrusts into the highlands. Up this rift had been carried a branch of the railway, and on that line are first Alexandropol, next the famous rock fortress of Kars, and finally, close to the Russo-Turkish frontier and near the summit of the pass, Sarikamish, another but more modern fortress and a Russian military base. The natural and easiest way across the highlands into the Tiflis trough, or *vice versa*, is through the rift. For ages, therefore, the defile has been the site of military works. The road across it is the main and ancient trade route between Tiflis and Erzerum, but the railway ends at Sarikamish. The sixty miles between that place and Erzerum have to be covered on horseback or on foot.

It was into this wintry wilderness with no railways at their disposal that the Turks, inspired and guided by their German advisers, resolved to plunge.

The Russians had in the Caucasus under the command of General Wozonoff an army three corps strong. Within a fortnight after the declaration of war part of this Russian force began a forward movement. An advance was made from Sarikamish along the Erzerum road. Occupying the summit of the pass the Russians on November 20 crossed the frontier. It was they who after all had taken the Turks by surprise, for they met with no serious opposition until the vanguard had reached and taken Koprikeui. Further progress was then checked by the 11th Turkish Corps, pushed forward

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from Erzerum to arrest them. It was necessary for the Russians to wait until the main body came up.

Possibly the Russian General suspected that, after the German manner, some stroke was afoot, and had determined to anticipate it. If so his inference was speedily confirmed. He learned that a Turkish army corps, the 10th, were executing a movement designed to attack him in flank. Frontally to force the defile, with its strong places, was to all intents impossible, but from Erzerum northwards a road runs through the hills to Olti, then, by a roundabout route leading over the Bardus pass, it is possible to descend upon Sarikamish from the north-west. It was hazardous to the last degree to attempt this remote pass in winter, but unquestionably the Turks were bent upon doing it. Meanwhile on the right of the troops moving over the Bardus pass, the 9th Turkish Corps pushed on from Hassan Kala over the mountains into the upper valley of the Araks with the manifest intention of approaching Sarikamish simultaneously from the south-west.

These three movements of the 10th, 9th and 11th Corps branched out from Erzerum like the fingers of a hand. Reaching the frontier, where they would be farthest apart, they would then converge, and close in on the Russian forces.

But the supreme Turkish adventure of this campaign, directed in fact and in person by Enver Pasha and a Headquarters Staff mainly of German officers, was represented by the march of the 1st Corps from Trebizond. The plan was for this Corps, moving south to Ardasa, to strike the valley of the Choruk, to follow that valley along the greater part of its length, more than 100 kilometres, to reach at its upper end the road from Batum, then to follow the lofty pass which zigzags across the shoulder of Mount Yalagaschamski, and finally to descend by the valley of the Kara to Ardagan. From there, assuming the Russian forces to be engaged in the defile round Sarikamish, it should be feasible to debouch upon the road and railway from Kars in the rear of that stronghold. In short, if not the whole

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Russian army, at any rate a great part of it ought to be caught cooped up in the "rift," and possibly compelled to surrender.

The plan was on paper attractive. Plainly, however, those who drew it up had only a very imperfect idea of the Caucasus in winter, or of what was involved in negotiating in winter the high passes of such a region.

The long march of the 1st Corps from Trebizond was assuredly a remarkable feat of endurance. As the road along the Choruk valley is rugged, and they would have to cut their way through snowdrifts, they were compelled to discard all artillery save mountain guns. The advantage of the move was that until they approached Ardagan they would be lost to view, and should descend upon that place as a surprise. The toils of the march may be judged from the fact that it occupied the greater part of two months.

This delay proved fatal to the scheme.

Withdrawing his advanced troops, Wozonoff concentrated in the first instance against the 10th Turkish Corps, and after an obstinate battle defeated it. The action followed by an energetic pursuit, uncovered the flank of the 9th Corps, which, caught in the Upper Valley of the Araks, and its retreat cut off, was destroyed. Its commander, Ikan Pasha, and his staff surrendered.

After this the attack was directed against the 1st Corps. Those troops had reached Ardagan on January 1, but reduced in strength and severely fatigued. When assailed they fought well, for their situation was desperate, but the lack of sufficient artillery was decisive. Driven back over the mountains into the Choruk valley, they were compelled to face the weary return march broken, dispirited, and short of supplies. January is the worst part of the winter and the month of severest storms. High up in the Choruk valley one such storm overtook them. Few survived.

It now remained only to deal with the 11th Corps. Meanwhile, reinforced, its resistance during a three days' battle at Kari Arga—January 17 to 19—proved

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determined, but faced by superior forces, and sustaining heavy losses, it was compelled to retire upon Erzerum.

Strictly, this part of the war does not enter within the scope of the present volume. The first campaign in the Caucasus, however, had so material an influence on the whole of the subsequent conflict in the Near East that apart from it later events can hardly be grasped in their true bearings. Enver Pasha's enterprise destroyed a large part of the Turkish first line forces.

With ports on both the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea, and a main line of railway linking them up, the Russians had much better facilities for sending troops and supplies into the Caucasus than had the Turks, and so long as communications by sea with Batum were not seriously threatened, they thus enjoyed a signal advantage. Unable seriously to threaten communications with Batum, the German-Turkish plan had been to offset the advantage by an unlooked-for move. For the moment General Wozonoff found himself in an awkward situation. His conduct, however, was marked by prudence, energy and ability, and those qualities altered the aspect of affairs.

These, nevertheless, were not the opening activities of the War. The initial thrust had come from the quarter where it was least expected—British India. In putting the Government of India on the alert the Germans had acted rashly. While they failed to shake British authority, they left it evident that an expedition to the head of the Persian Gulf was among the near probabilities. The German aim had been to make the dispatch of any armed force from India impossible. Their intrigue had an opposite effect. So far from disclosing discontent with British rule in the Peninsula, the outbreak of war brought from Indian princes and States an impressive, and as events proved a sincere, demonstration of attachment to the Imperial Power.

In all, up to the end of 1916, 290,000 men, 210,000 of them native troops, had been sent from India overseas. Part of these forces were destined for service in France, the others for service in Egypt and East Africa. In Sep-

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tember, 1914, Sir Edmund Barrow, military secretary at the India Office, had drawn up a memorandum urging the occupation of Basra on the three grounds that it would tend to safeguard Egypt, to impress the Arabs and to protect the Anglo-Persian Oil Installation. Upon that recommendation the 6th Division out of the troops intended for service in Europe was reserved for an expedition to the Persian Gulf. For many years the British authorities in India had had political relations with the semi-independent Arab sheiks who ruled the territories at the head of the Gulf or adjoining its western shores, and Sir Percy Cox, selected to accompany the expedition as political officer, received instructions to get into touch with the Sheiks of Koweit, Murrammah, and Najd. In view of the call for prompt action the Poonah brigade, part of the 6th Division, in the middle of October embarked under the command of Brigadier-General W. S. Delamain, as an advance force. It was to occupy Abadan, the island in the Shatt-el-Arab on which were situated the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's refineries.

Consisting of the 2nd Dorsets, the 20th Punjaub Infantry, the 10th (Wellesley) Rifles, the 117th Mah-rattas and two batteries of light guns, the advance force reached Barhein, at the head of the Gulf, on October 23. The first operation was to capture the Turkish fort of Fao, at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab. Following a bombardment by the gunboat *Odin*, the garrison of the fort were overpowered. Having secured this post, General Delamain sailed with his flotilla up the estuary, and disembarking his troops at Saniyeh, on the Turkish shore opposite Abadan, proceeded, on November 7, to form an entrenched camp.

From Bagdad to Basra, following the course of the Tigris, the distance is 502 miles, and to follow the river in traversing this region is the only practicable course. At the very best rate of marching the Turkish troops ordered to Basra, if they advanced from Bagdad on foot could not complete the journey in much less than six weeks. With the means of river transport at their disposal the march had to be carried out in that manner,

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the guns, stores, and other impedimenta accompanying the troops on tugs and barges. In summer, the sandy loam of the Mesopotamian wastes is often blown by the wind into great clouds of dust. In winter, the rainy season, however, the soil becomes an adhesive mud. It then is heavy going. Save in the beds of the Tigris and the Euphrates, no stone is found in the country. The surface is one vast alluvial deposit, for the most part as level as an inland sea, and, indeed, giving the impression as much of water as of land, an impression strengthened by the rare ridges rising out of the expanse like islands, by the equal rarity of trees, and by the far-spreading shallow lakes or swamps which fill the depressions. This state of things has resulted from the ruin of the ancient system of irrigation, traces of which, existent after 2,000 years of neglect and decay, add to the melancholy monotony of the prospect.

There was every reason why the Turks should move to occupy Basra in force. Apart from the military damage that must result to the British from the occupation of the Anglo-Persian oil-field and the seizure of the refineries, the vilayet of Basra from below Kurna included a tract of country, not merely fertile, but populated and well tilled. Joining at Kurna, the Tigris and the Euphrates unite to form the estuary of the Shatt-el-Arab. From Basra, fifty miles below Kurna, the eastern shore of the estuary is Persian territory, the western nominally Turkish—nominally because Turkish authority on these confines of the Empire was at best uncertain and disputed. An essential feature of the German scheme, nevertheless, was command of the outlet to the Persian Gulf. Alike to establish that command and to anticipate the landing of a hostile force, troops had been sent south from Bagdad at the end of September and by what was in effect a forced march, had arrived at Basra on or about the same day that the British advance force landed at Saniyeh.

News of the British landing must have reached the Turks at Basra immediately on their arrival. No time was therefore lost in pushing down to Saniyeh a strong

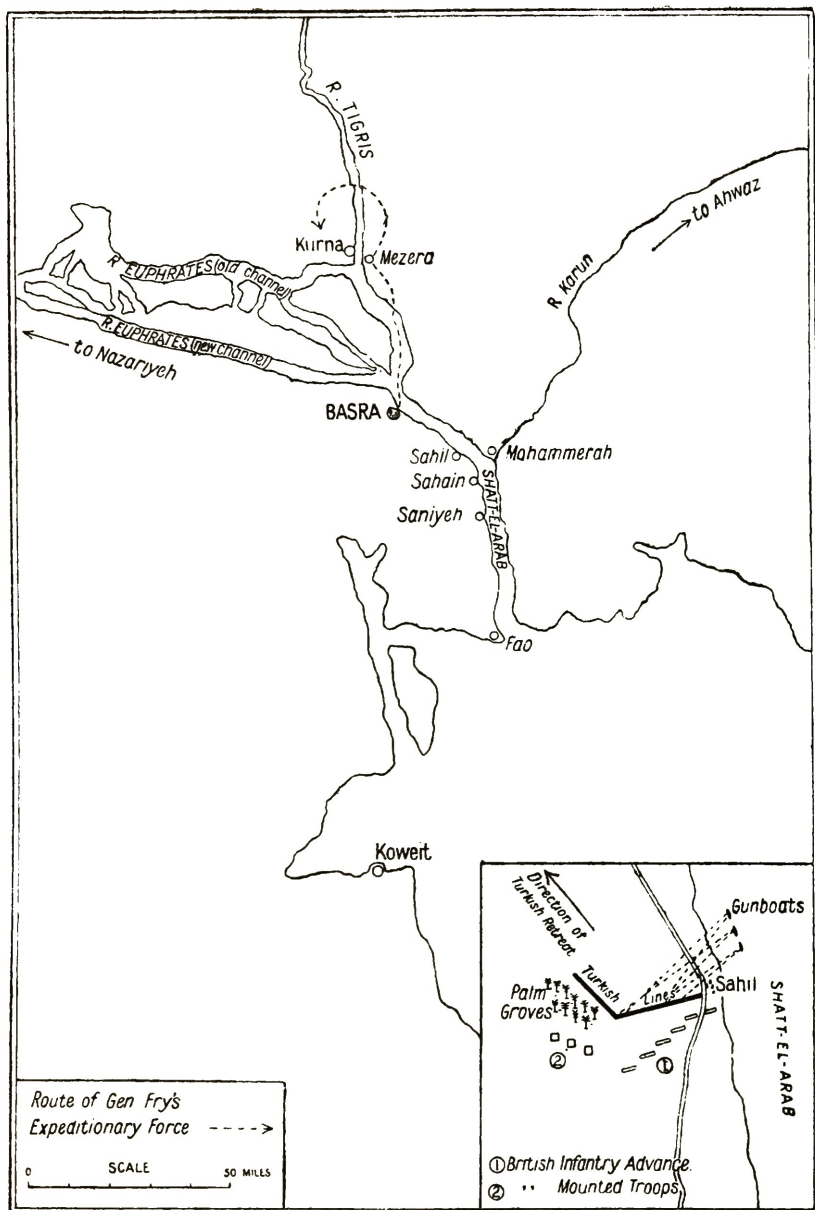
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reconnaissance. On November 11 the reconnaissance came within a short day's march of the British camp. The Mahrattas and Punjaubis were sent out to deal with it. In the skirmish the Turks were defeated.

Decidedly the Turks' best opportunity was to attack the British camp forthwith with all the strength at their disposal. Unfortunately for them their men were little fit for immediate campaigning. Reinforcements were sent from Basra, and proceeded to entrench at Sahain, four miles north of Saniyeh, thus cutting the route to Basra by land.

Two days later, however, on November 13, Lieut.-General Sir A. A. Barrett sailed up the Shatt-el-Arab from India and reached Saniyeh with the remaining troops of the 6th Division—the Ahmednagar Brigade, and the Belgaum Brigade. The first (Brigadier-General D. H. Dobbie) was formed of the 1st Oxford L.I., and the 103rd and 119th Mahrattas; the second (Brigadier-General C. I. Fry) of the 2nd Norfolks, the 110th Mahrattas, the 7th Rajputs and the 114th Rajputanas. With the force were the 48th Pioneers, the 3rd Sappers and Miners, and the 33rd Cavalry.

As soon as practicable after the disembarkation the Turks at Sahain were (November 15) attacked by the Poona brigade and dislodged. But on the 17th word was brought in that the main Turkish force from Basra was advancing. A general British attack was accordingly decided upon, and the whole force moved out. At Sahil, nine miles north of the British camp, the Turkish army was discovered posted with its left on the estuary, and its right, where its artillery was chiefly in position, covered by groves of date palm. In front was a bare and level plain. As it seemed advisable to throw the weight of the British attack towards the enemy's left, where our gunboats were able to assist by enfilading the hostile trenches, while holding his right, and thus to turn him off the river, and by forcing him at the same time off the Basra route imperil his retreat, the British infantry had to advance in open order across this exposed tract. They carried out the manœuvre,



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however, with dash and coolness, and this intrepidity so impressed the Turks that they broke before the British could close. The Turkish casualties chiefly suffered in the pursuit, and were reckoned at 1,500 men. Those of the British force were 353, but the killed only numbered 38.

Not only was the road to Basra cleared by this action ; the Turks had been disorganised. To follow up the blow, part of the British force was embarked on two river steamers, and preceded by the gunboats made for Basra by water. The rest of the troops meanwhile pressed the retreating enemy by land. Some distance below Basra an attempt had been made to block the fairway by sinking three steamers across it. A battery of Turkish guns posted to cover the barrier was rapidly put out of action and some hours' work sufficed to blow up the obstruction. On November 22, that having been done, the flotilla and advanced troops pushed on at full speed. They reached Basra early on the same day. Rumour had affirmed that the Turks had evacuated the place, and the report was found to be true. The Turks had withdrawn the day before, leaving the town to be plundered by their auxiliaries. In the course of that afternoon (November 22) the main body of the British force marched in.

Measures were taken for converting Basra into a base camp, but the difficulties were various. There were no quay, for landing either men or goods, no warehouses or buildings suitable for storage. Everything had to be improvised. General Barrett had brought with him two months' supplies, and these had somehow to be accommodated. Unfortunately, the only public building in the place useful for such a purpose, the Turkish custom house, had been burned down. So far, however, as lack of material permitted the camp was put into order.

Part of the Turkish forces having retired upon Kurna, Lieut.-Colonel Frazer was on December 3 sent up the estuary with a detachment of the Norfolks and Indian troops, accompanied by three gunboats, two armed launches, and an armed yacht. Going on ahead while Frazer put his men ashore four miles below Kurna, on

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the western bank of the Tigris, the gunboats found the enemy strongly posted at Mezera, on the east bank, where Turkish batteries covered the navigable channel. In this part of its course, though the Tigris is 300 yards wide, it is on the whole shallow. The deeper channel winds between the shoals from bank to bank in acute turns, and it being impossible to keep in midstream, apart from the current which runs at four knots per hour, navigation is difficult and dangerous. Shore batteries, therefore, formed a formidable obstruction.

On approaching Kurna, Lieut.-Colonel Frazer soon learned that the place was held in a strength quite beyond his small force to confront. He accordingly withdrew and sent for reinforcements.

These, the rest of the Norfolks and the 7th Rajputs, under the command of General Fry, arrived on December 7. An attack upon Mezera was then resolved upon, and the Turks were driven out.

The capture of Mezera enabled the British, if they chose, to cross the river six miles above Kurna, and the plan of crossing at that point was adopted. Though it was a dangerous service, men of the Sappers and Miners Corps gallantly swam the stream, carrying a line attached to a hempen cable which was then hauled across, and with a flat-bottomed dhow which had been towed up, formed a ferry.

In the meanwhile, the Turks in Kurna had sat tight, evidently uncertain as to the direction of the main attack, and probably thinking the crossing of the river higher up a ruse. Since the town is close to the point where the Tigris and Euphrates join, the appearance of the main British force to the north and west completely cut them off. The British troops at once began to throw up entrenchments. Seeing this, a party of Turkish officers came out under a white flag to parley. General Fry insisted on unconditional surrender, and there was nothing for it but to comply. Next day (December 9) the garrison of 1,200 men laid down their arms. The equipment taken included nine guns.

So far the British blows had proved to be swift.

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The hold on the estuary and the course of the Tigris as far as Kurna, 120 miles from the sea, was secure. But the organisation difficulties with which the British commander found himself confronted at Basra in establishing a basis for future operations gave the enemy an opening. Notwithstanding the loss of Kurna and Mezera, a Turkish force advanced to the Karun, the river which flows into the Shatt-el-Arab from the east. The pipe line from the oil-fields is carried along the southern bank of this stream. Evidently these enemy troops were the reinforcements whose destination had been Kurna. Finding that place already lost they had struck east towards Ahwaz, where, as part of the plan for patrolling the pipe line, the British had established a post. In the face of overwhelming numbers the post had to withdraw, and a small expeditionary force sent up to recover the position found the Turks too strong to be dislodged.

As the Turks were also at Nasariyeh on the Euphrates, 68 miles west of Kurna, General Barrett found that to meet all the demands upon his division forthwith would have involved its dispersal over a wide extent of country. Already the force had been reduced by the placing of garrisons at Koweit, Mezera and Kurna, and by the pipe line patrol. Further dispersal would, in the circumstances, have been highly imprudent. A fourth brigade was on its way from India, and a fifth was to follow, but until the arrival of these troops, it was necessary for the General to cut his coat according to his cloth. In the region occupied, a division of troops to go round had to be carefully handled. He had no alternative in the interval save to mark time.

Nevertheless, looking at the situation broadly, the Turkish project regarding Basra had failed. Not merely had the British got in first, but with their sea communication it was clear they could not be ejected unless by an effort which geographical conditions and Turkish resources alike put out of the question.

How, meanwhile, had fortune gone with the expedition against Egypt? The main reliance in that instance had

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been on revolt. At the head of the intrigue against British authority was the Khedive, Abbas Hilmi. He had been in regular correspondence with Constantinople and Berlin, and it seemingly was not doubted either by the Germans or by the Turks that his influence would render the so-called Nationalist movement formidable. A plot had been set on foot for undermining the fidelity of the Egyptian army, and assurances given that on the first appearance of a Turkish force on the frontier the Egyptian troops might be depended upon to rise against the British occupation. In November, 1914, on the declaration of war with Turkey, Abbas fled to Italy, then neutral. Later, he made his way to Vienna, where he was received with every outward mark of respect, and from Vienna travelled through Rumania to Constantinople.

In Egypt, however, it speedily became apparent that thirty-eight years of British administration had wrought a profound change. Abbas was deposed, the country declared a British protectorate, and Prince Hussein Kamel, second and favourite son of Ismail Pasha, raised to the throne with the title of Sultan. Distinguished by his public spirit, and his consistent concern in improvements, more especially those relating to agriculture, the new Sultan had had experience of public affairs as a Minister. These changes afforded a test of British authority on the one hand and of the influence of the so-called Nationalist movement on the other. The movement showed itself factitious and hollow. Not even those who had been paid to advocate it under the guise of independence showed themselves prepared for a return to Turkish domination. The moment advocacy became dangerous, and profits from it ceased, the agitation collapsed.

Apart from that, the inflow of troops from India and the appearance in Egypt for the first time of the magnificent corps from Australia and New Zealand convinced even the most fanatical that to pit the Egyptian army against such forces was the idlest of imaginings. It would have been the idlest of imaginings

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had the Egyptian army been infected with "Nationalist" sentiment, and the fellahin of a like mind. Both the army and the peasant cultivators, however, were in the enjoyment of conditions better than had ever been known—better than their less fortunate fathers had ever dreamed of. To them the movement for alliance with the Turks made no appeal. The appeal had been addressed to their religious feelings, but their religious feelings had been respected and the appeal ran counter to their everyday perceptions and to their common sense.

Briefly, the idea of the state of affairs in Egypt entertained at Berlin and Constantinople had no foundation in fact.

Since, however, Egypt was the greatest of the prizes the new *régime* at Constantinople had set out to gain, and since the *régime* had to stand by success or fall by failure, belief in the certainty of a revolt in Egypt acted as a spur, and so acted though the means were, sanely weighed, utterly insufficient. The first necessity for any successful invasion of Egypt is sea power. Apart from sea power there is no access save across Sinai, a hundred and more miles of stony and waterless desert divided from an equally arid mass of mountains on the south by a tract of waterless sand. The region is rainless. Not a cloud is ever seen in the burning sky. With the exception of the dry and stunted scrub in the hollows of the southern mountains, Sinai is dead; cursed by an everlasting thirst; silent with the silence of eternal death.

Yet it was across this tract that the Germans had persuaded the Turks that their military science would enable them without command of the coast to transport a modern army with the machinery of modern war. In part the feat was to be facilitated by the laying down of a light railway.

Sober-minded men might well have had their misgivings, and for that reason probably Djemal Pasha had been picked out for the Damascus command. More than any other of the Young Turk party he was noted for his Anglophobia.

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The concentration at Damascus was intended, however, not only to supply troops for an expedition against Egypt, but to guard against a possible descent upon the coast of Syria, and against malcontents.

No time was lost in launching the Egyptian part of the enterprise. Reports were spread that the attempt was to be made on a large scale—by three or more divisions of troops. All who knew the difficulties accepted the reports with reserve. It is possible enough that Djemal Pasha, whose military abilities as disclosed in the Balkan War were not high, believed a strong force could be sent as far as the Suez Canal, and it is equally possible that the chief of his staff, a German, von Kressenstein, thought as he did. Certainly the preparations at Gaza pointed to big things. But evidently when practical details were gone into these larger designs had to be given up. The great problem, of course, was that of water. From Gaza by way of El Arish to Kantara on the Suez Canal is 120 miles. Assuming success, at least twelve days' supply of water would have to be carried both for the men and for the transport animals and cavalry mounts. In addition to the usual skins used for the purpose in the East, a large consignment of kerosine and petrol tins had been collected, and the intention was to carry them full, and employ those empty on arrival to buoy up rafts and boats on which the canal was to be crossed. On its face it looked a brilliant idea, and a cheap one besides—always a recommendation. But even this would only be practicable by moving forward in stages and establishing depots. And though failure was not counted upon, looking at the imagined imminent revolt in Egypt, still there was the possibility, and it had to be provided for.

The preparations had been in train before war was declared, and the force that set out, early in November, consisted of the 8th Corps, part of the 4th, a body of skirmishers who had been employed during the Italian War in Tripoli, and were inured to desert fighting, and as a vanguard some 2,000 Bedouin irregulars. Besides

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material for rafts the expedition carried with it a number of flat-bottomed boats.

The Sinai peninsula is politically part of Egypt, and the British had a small force at El Arish on the coast, but that post had been withdrawn, and the only troops east of the canal were a battalion of Gurkhas, and the Bikanir Camel Corps at Kantiyeh, the western end of the El Arish route. Advancing without opposition to El Arish and finding that place evacuated, the enemy reconnoitred the track to the west, and on November 21 his irregulars appeared before Kantiyeh and engaged in a skirmish with the Camel Corps. Nothing more was seen of him until January 28, when there was another attack or demonstration at Kantiyeh, driven off with loss by the Gurkhas. This attack was a ruse. In the interval the expedition, leaving part of the 8th Corps in garrison, had been making its way south from there along the Wady-el-Arish a stony valley extending inland from the coast to the sandy tract of the interior. From that point, by following the Pilgrims' Route from Mecca, the Suez Canal may be reached near Toussoum, where the general flatness on the eastern side of the canal is broken by sand dunes.

This undulating stretch of the desert had been selected as the point of crossing. In the course of February 2 the van of the hostile column, reaching the dunes, had as stealthily as possible spread themselves along the banks of the canal. They waited until nightfall, and then entered upon preparations to launch their boats and rafts, covered by the fire of their batteries of field guns, and two heavy pieces of 6-in. calibre transported with great labour. It was still light enough, however, in that clear air for some of these movements to be observed from Toussoum, on the farther side of the canal. The British troops were on the alert, and word was sent to right and left. Lining the embankment on the west side the British wherever boats or rafts were pushed down to the water played on the embarkation places with machine-gun and rifle fire. The fusillade was answered by the enemy and as more men came

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into action on either side rapidly extended. One after another boats and rafts were sunk.

At daybreak on February 3 the battle became general from Ismailia to the Bitter Lakes. Three British gunboats, the armed Indian transport *Hardinge*, and the French guardships *Requin* and *D'Entrecasteaux*, entered into it, and made any crossing of the canal by the enemy out of the question. His positions were heavily bombarded both by the ships and by the British batteries. During the earlier part of the day he endeavoured to stand his ground, but towards afternoon his fire slackened. The British commander, General Sir John Maxwell, suspecting that a retirement had begun, threw over a column of Indian troops at Toussoum, and a second column at Serapeum. The dunes were speedily cleared, and 600 prisoners taken. Evidently the enemy loss had been heavy, for some 400 dead were found. The hostile guns, however, had been withdrawn as soon as an assault became imminent, and extended pursuit by infantry across the loose sand of this region was judged inadvisable. On the difficulties of the march back no light was publicly thrown, but they were deterrent enough to damp the ambition of conquering Egypt.

Such is the record of the German-Turkish offensive. The war had not opened prosperously.

## CHAPTER IV

### GALLIPOLI : THE NAVAL OPERATIONS

The Entente Powers and Greece—Political mistakes—Reasons advanced for the Gallipoli project—Their strategical unsoundness—Theories concerning naval attack upon land defences—Preliminary bombardment of Dardanelles forts—Turkish counter-preparations—The Allied Fleet—Attack of February 19, 1915—Its results—Arrival of Naval reinforcements—The attack of February 25—Attack of March 5—Renewed on March 7 and 10—Change in the Naval Command—The attack of March 18—Its failure—Causes of the reverse.

LOOKING at the events so far narrated, there were two measures which in their earlier stages might rapidly have advanced the interests of the Allies.

The first was a steady and consistent pressure upon the King of Greece to follow a constitutional course of conduct. The grounds for the application of pressure were clear. A constitutional ruler may have personal views and opinions, but a personal policy on the part of such a ruler is not constitutional. By initiating, therefore, and carrying out a personal policy Constantine was acting in defiance, not merely of the rights of the Greek people, but of the express authority of the three Guardian Powers. In their naval strength the Guardian Powers had the means at hand of applying the necessary pressure, and the French Government were in favour of applying it. Constantine, on the other hand, had a certain influence at the Court of Russia. He was first cousin alike of the Tsar and of King George V. So far as the British Court was concerned, this relationship was negligible. But at the Court of Russia, seconded by the Empress,

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the influence of Constantine counted for a good deal. At all events it was enough, in face of the resultant hesitancy of the Russian Government, to sway the British Cabinet towards a policy of circumspection. There was a reluctance to proceed to extremes if by any possibility extremes could be avoided, and of their tolerance both Constantine and the German Government took advantage without scruple.

The second advisable measure was a descent by an Allied force on the coast of Syria. The weak point of Turkey was precisely the southern confines of the Empire. In entering upon the war the Turks and their German advisers had counted upon hostile attack from two quarters—a land attack by the Russians in the Caucasus, and a naval attack by the Western Powers from the Mediterranean. So far as the southern confines of the Empire were concerned, in place of looking for attack they were prepared for offence.

The basis of this latter calculation was that alike in India and in Egypt the British would be too fully occupied in dealing with disaffection on the spot to attempt any movement in Asia Minor. In Egypt, however, as well as in India, the effects of British administration had made an attack upon Turkey-in-Asia at once practicable and safe. Really secure in Egypt on the best foundation of security—popular contentment—and not less really secure in India, the British possessed in the Great Dependency the resources for a military movement against Turkey on a formidable scale. Manifestly this introduced into the situation an element which altered the balance of affairs fundamentally. At the time, however, the effects of British administration, and more especially in Egypt, were not justly appreciated. In part the British Cabinet were pressed by the necessities of the war in France; in part they hampered themselves in meeting those necessities by apprehension of a German invasion; and they allowed themselves in consequence baselessly to be impressed by the belief that in the Nearer East a defensive policy ought for the moment to have the first place, though the situation,

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rightly estimated, called for confidence and active energy. In this misjudgment the reverses both of the Gallipoli and of the Mesopotamia campaigns had their origin.

Instead, therefore, of throwing an important force as soon as possible into Mesopotamia, and pushing it forward, and of completing that movement by another against the sensitive spot of Turkey-in-Asia, the Syrian coast and hinterland, an undertaking for which, with command of the sea, Egypt afforded an admirable base, the British Government decided upon the project of attempting to force the passage of the Dardanelles.

The question of whether this project ought to be ranked as a subsidiary or a divergent operation has given rise to some discussion. On the facts its character admits of no doubt. It was divergent. In plain terms it was at that time off the main track of the war. Had the Turkish Empire been pressed from its weak side on the mainland of Asia, the south—the weak side because the land communications from Constantinople were both difficult and extended, and made an attack based upon sea command, west or east, easier than a Turkish defence—that proceeding must most materially have aided the Russian operations in the Caucasus and would have co-ordinated with them. On the other hand, to attack the Dardanelles was to attack the Turkish Empire, not at its weakest, but at its strongest point. Furthermore, the attack was launched before any serious attempt had been made to thin out the Turkish forces at that point beforehand. Thus left for the time in security where they had most cause to fear attack—on their southern confines—the Turks were free to concentrate the necessary resistance at the Dardanelles, and the Russian operations, in place of being promoted, were retarded alike by the resultant misapplication of British strength, and by the starvation of the Mesopotamia campaign which the Dardanelles project imposed.

Among the reasons which dictated the latter enterprise was the belief that a forcing of the Dardanelles, leading to the capitulation of Constantinople, would bring about an immediate collapse of the Turkish power,

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or at any rate of the German *régime* in Turkey. There were next the advantages, too manifest for discussion, of re-opening the ice-free route to Russia through the Black Sea. It was an attempt, in a word, to find a short cut which would at the same time have afforded a spectacular triumph. But though that has been more than once asserted, the enterprise was not asked for by the Russian Headquarters Staff, for, as shown, events in the Caucasus made necessary no such request, and to the Russians in the war with Turkey the project was of no real military assistance. Though undeniably it would have been of most material assistance on the Eastern main front had it been attended by success, was there from the outset on the plans adopted any probability of success?

That question must be answered in the negative. As planned, the enterprise was radically unsound.

For the *closing* of the Dardanelles, and for keeping them closed if necessary, the occupation in force of the peninsula of Gallipoli would have sufficed, and that fact the Germans and Turks grasped at once and acted upon. But for the forcible *opening* of the Dardanelles it was essential, not merely to obtain naval command of the Straits, but military command of both shores, and that military command could not be obtained unless and until the Turkish army had been defeated, and decisively defeated, in the field. To hold one shore even with a naval force in the Straits would not have made the Dardanelles safe for merchant traffic, and it should have been evident that to attack the Turkish army on the peninsula of Gallipoli, close to its main base, and on the most difficult ground that the entire Turkish Empire presented, and to attack it in those circumstances with a force less than its own strength was inviting disaster. Much more should this have been evident when in the background there lay the still larger scheme of capturing Constantinople, which assuredly would not have been taken readily.

Not merely was the Gallipoli project not fully thought out; the preparations bore the traces of haste.

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Before everything this was a naval operation. Only when, by naval attack upon nodal points, the effective defence of Gallipoli by a Turkish force had been made impracticable could a military attack and occupation by British forces have become an acceptable proposition. It is now evident that the three phases of any well-planned scheme in point of method should have been : (1) naval attack upon nodal points of the defence, *not* immediate attack upon shore batteries ; (2) military assault in *support* and completion of the naval bombardment of nodal points ; (3) naval attack upon the Narrows defences in *conjunction* with a land attack, and for the purpose of throwing troops over to commanding points on the Asiatic shore.

If the naval attack failed the enterprise failed. It was not when the British troops were withdrawn that the project was damned ; the project was in fact dead and damned when the Allied battleships retired after their futile and misconceived bombardment of the forts in the Narrows from within the Straits.

In the naval attack there were engaged altogether sixteen Allied battleships, twelve British and four French, mounting sixty-four guns equal to or greater in calibre than the heaviest ordnance on the forts. It is doubtful if on the forts or in the movable batteries supporting them there were half that number of very heavy pieces. The superiority of fire on the part of the Allied fleet was theoretically overwhelming. In addition to the mass of heavy guns the ships mounted a formidable medium and lighter armament.

The question of ships *versus* forts has given rise to some controversy. It has been contended that ships ought never to be pitted against batteries ashore, a doctrine which clearly limits the value and utility of warships. In support of that view the contention, backed by an active school of naval opinion, has been advanced that the aim of a fort, from a platform fixed and steady, is so much more reliable than the aim from a floating platform always in movement, that a fort can more than hold its own even with guns of smaller calibre.

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But evidently the logical consequence of this opinion, if sound, is that a modern battleship as an engine of war has much less than the power it is supposed to have. On the other hand, naval gunnery is assumed to allow for the oscillations of the ship as a platform, to be founded on that allowance, and, if efficient, very largely to overcome it. The view referred to therefore comes in truth to this, that at its best naval gunnery cannot reach the same standard of efficiency in hits as land gunnery; is, indeed, so markedly below land gunnery that a piece of, say, 9·2 inches on land may be ranged against a piece of 15 inches at sea, if the latter be brought within range of the former. Proof of this theory from experience with modern ordnance is lacking. The proof advanced is out of date.

Such conclusions unfortunately leave out of account a point of great moment—that a fort is a fixed target, while ships are, in fact, movable forts. Their very power of movement is a signal advantage. They can be grouped and re-grouped as necessary, and at ranges deemed most advisable. What land fort ever built or likely to be built could withstand the combined bombardment of sixty-four monster guns?

On November 3, 1914, there was a long range bombardment of the forts at the entrance of the Straits. It served no purpose save to put the Turks on the alert. Previously to this a large German mail steamer had got through the blockade and reached Constantinople with a cargo of marine mines and heavy shells. The incident enabled the Turks to establish a field consisting of five lines of mines, and to guard the field they made use of an old warship, *Messoudieh*. On December 13, Lieut. Holbrook in command of a submarine, passed up the Straits beneath the minefield and torpedoed the guardship. The feat was brilliant, and Lieut. Holbrook was rewarded with the Victoria Cross, but up to this time, from the point of view of war, all the score really lay with the Turks.

And save for the attack upon *Messoudieh* there were between November 3, 1914, and the middle of

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February, 1915, no further offensive naval operations except a seizure of the island of Tenedos.

During this interval of three and a half months a delay, largely due to discussion of the Dardanelles project and preparations, the Germans and Turks were hard at work re-fortifying both Gallipoli and the Straits. The British Government had entered on a war with Turkey without definite ideas of how such a war was to be carried on. In the blank the Dardanelles scheme had been pushed to the front. Both naval and military men had doubts, but do not seem to have insisted upon them.

At length, however, a squadron of older battleships had been formed for the purpose, and dispatched to the Mediterranean. They were *Inflexible*, *Agamemnon*, *Cornwallis*, *Vengeance* and *Triumph*. In the Mediterranean the squadron was joined by the pre-Dreadnought French ships *Bouvet*, *Suffren* and *Gaulois*. The eight mounted together thirty 12-in. guns. But if there was substance in the view that ships ought not to be employed against forts, this armament against the reinforced enemy works was palpably inadequate. *Triumph's* four heavy guns were only 10-in. The British squadron was under the command of Vice-Admiral S. Carden; the French contingent under the command of Rear-Admiral Guepratte.

On February 19, at eight in the morning, the bombardment of the forts at the entrance of the Dardanelles opened. There were four of these works: on the European side that at Cape Helles, facing the Ægean and the batteries of Sedd-el-Bahr facing the Straits; on the Asiatic side the fort on the Kum Kale promontory, and the newer fort at Orkanieh, fronting the open sea. The forts mounted no armament equal to the 12-in. guns of the battleships, for during the first hours of the attack not a shot was fired in reply. Apparently all the forts were engaged by the squadron simultaneously, two ships attacking each work and evidently all the forts were repeatedly hit. Still it remained doubtful if they had been put out of action. In the afternoon,

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therefore, six ships of the squadron closed in. Then at length the forts opened fire. Their shooting was poor, which may be attributed in part to the bombardment, in part to the movement of the ships. None of the ships was hit.

By sunset all the works had been silenced except Kum Kale. At nightfall the ships were withdrawn. The bombardment had involved a heavy expenditure of shell, and it seems a fair question whether the engagement of each fort in turn by the whole of the squadron might not have economised munitions and given a more complete result.

During the next few days eight more ships arrived, They were *Queen Elizabeth*, *Irresistible*, *Albion*, *Majestic*, *Lord Nelson*, *Ocean* and *Prince George*, and the French battleship *Charlemagne*. *Queen Elizabeth* mounted the newest 15-in. guns. These ships completed the force intended to attack the defence works in the Narrows.

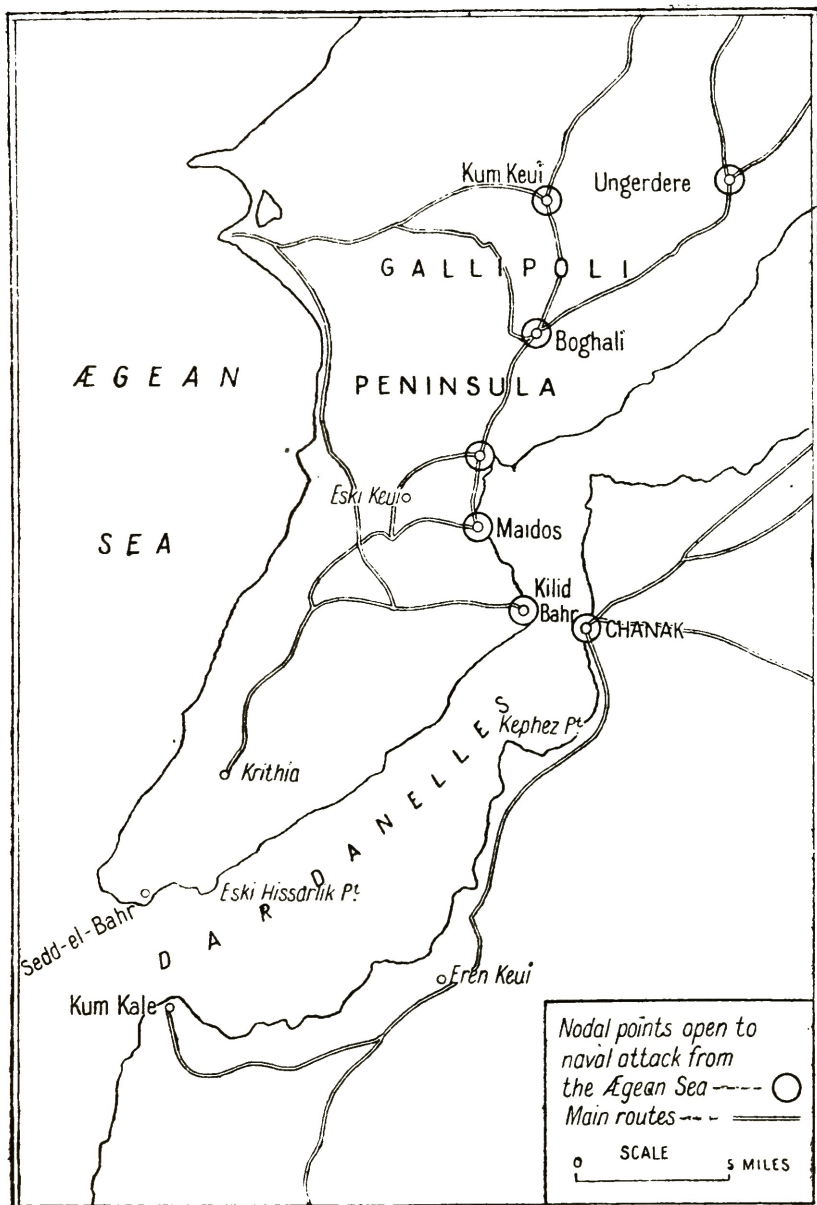
On February 25 the bombardment of the outer forts was renewed. To begin with, part was taken in it only by *Queen Elizabeth*, *Irresistible* and *Agamemnon*. Firing at extreme range, they were beyond the reach of the hostile ordnance, for the total heavy armament of the forts consisted of ten 10·2-in. and four 9·2-in. guns. The guns of *Queen Elizabeth* having in a ninety minutes' attack silenced the Cape Helles batteries, *Vengeance* and *Cornwallis* were ordered to run closer in and deal with the lighter armament. At the same time, *Suffren* and *Charlemagne* closed in on the Asiatic forts, and after the Cape Helles work had been dealt with, *Albion* and *Triumph* stood in against the lighter batteries of Seddel-Bahr. In this second bombardment *Agamemnon* had been the only ship struck by a hostile shell. Though during the week's interval the Turks had been at work repairing the fortifications and remounting the guns, or mounting new ones, the hits were all on one side. This time the forts had been silenced altogether, notwithstanding that the attack had been sectional only. Minesweeping in the Straits covered by the ships and the lighter craft was at once entered upon. Next day, that

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having been completed, the ships proceeded to attack the inner fortifications.

The entrance to the Straits between Cape Helles and Kum Kale is not more than two and a half miles wide, but, within, the Asiatic shore sweeps away in the crescent known as Eren Keui Bay, and the channel expands to a breadth of nearly five miles. Then the opposite shores gradually approach until at the end of this outer section, the entrance to the Narrows, nine miles from Kum Kale, the width is rather less than one mile. The coast here on both sides consists of bold bluffs, Kilid Bahr on the European, and Chanak on the Asiatic shore. It was on these bluffs where there had been constructed the main fortifications. The forts at Chanak looking down the outer section of the Straits were understood to be armed with pieces of 14-in. calibre. Those on Kilid Bahr faced partly down the Straits, partly in the opposite direction so as to command the Narrows, that peculiar bend in the channel five miles in length which at its inner or northern end is marked by an outlet little wider than the access. Between the contracted inlet and the hardly less contracted outlet the Narrows expand to a breadth of more than two and a half miles.

The operations on February 26 were a reconnaissance. In advance of the main fortifications were Fort Dardanos on the Gallipoli shore, and Soghandere on the Asiatic shore. *Albion*, *Vengeance*, and *Majestic* were ordered to steam in and attack these works in order to ascertain their armament. It proved to be of no more than medium weight, but the attack drew the fire of batteries hitherto unlocated, and it became evident that the mere demolition of the permanent works would not suffice. The plan of the enemy clearly was to replace the destroyed forts by earthworks which might be abandoned when knocked to pieces, and reconstructed elsewhere. Activities of that description were afoot behind Kum Kale, and with the plain intention when the fleet entered the channel of opening an unexpected bombardment of it from the rear, and at close range. Landing parties of marines were accordingly thrown



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ashore to complete the destruction of the enemy's guns in the entrance works. This, covered by the guns of the battleships, they did.

Owing to northerly winds and a heavy sea, nothing further was attempted by the Allies for a week. But on March 4, the weather having moderated, *Lord Nelson* and *Ocean* went forward and once more threw landing parties ashore. This time, however, the Turks, realising the damaging character of the manœuvre, were prepared to resist in force. The landing party at Kum Kale, after a hot fight against superior numbers, were driven back to their boats with a loss of 47 killed, wounded and missing.

Next day, March 5, the first attack began on the main fortification. It was directed against the forts at Kilid Bahr. One of them was blown up, apparently by a shell firing the magazine.

On March 6 the bombardment was resumed within the channel by *Vengeance*, *Albion*, *Prince George*, *Majestic* and *Suffren*. Neglecting the main fortifications, these ships dealt with Dardanos, Soghandere, and batteries along the shores of the outer Straits. The main fortifications were coincidentally attacked by *Queen Elizabeth*, *Ocean* and *Agamemnon* from the Gulf of Saros. From the farther side of Gallipoli they threw their shells across the peninsula on to the works at Chanak, which were well within range. One object was to prevent those forts from firing on the ships operating in the channel.

The Turks replied to this bombardment, not only from the forts, but with high angle fire from heavy howitzers posted on the heights of the Gallipoli peninsula.

On March 7 the four French battleships of the fleet steamed into the Straits and renewed the attack on Dardanos, and the works there were silenced. At the same time, *Lord Nelson* and *Agamemnon* engaged batteries re-established at the outer entrance on both sides. Chanak took part in the defence. On the previous day the works there appeared to have been seriously damaged, and the fire of the batteries, first becoming irregular,

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had finally ceased. But it was now evident that all the guns had not been put out of action.

During the next two days nothing was done, but on March 10 there was both a bombardment of enemy batteries which in the interval had for a third time been put into position at Cape Helles and Kum Kale, and a bombardment from the Gulf of Saros of the Bulair lines. On March 11 the batteries at the outer entrance of the Straits had once more been silenced.

Again there was an interval of inactivity. It arose chiefly from a change in the command. Admiral Carden, obliged to retire on account of ill-health, was succeeded by Vice-Admiral J. M. de Robeck. It was under that officer that the attack was continued on March 18.

The weather was favourable—the sea smooth, the wind light, and visibility good. Admiral de Robeck decided upon an attack from within the channel.

The fleet was formed into three squadrons: the first consisting of *Queen Elizabeth*, *Prince George*, *Lord Nelson*, *Inflexible*, *Agamemnon*, and *Triumph*; the second of the French ships, *Suffren*, *Bowet*, *Gaulois* and *Charlemagne*; the third of *Albion*, *Ocean*, *Vengeance*, *Swiftsure*, *Irresistible* and *Majestic*.

The plan was to attack the main fortifications of the Narrows. After the forts had been disabled by the heavy guns of the leading formation, the second squadron, closing in, was to attack at short range. The rear formation, supporting the second, was to finish off the demolition of the defences.

To begin with, the attack went well. The powerful ordnance of the leading ships firing at visible targets, and at a range not exceeding eight miles, which was rapidly shortened to five, reduced the fire of the defences to irregularity and then to feebleness. In these circumstances the second squadron of French ships ran in, and as far as could be judged the manœuvre was effective. The forts on both sides made no reply.

It was now deemed advisable that the third squadron should advance. In those narrow waters, and with a

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current in the Straits averaging four knots per hour, the retirement of the second squadron to make way for the third was a movement that called for care. It was impossible to carry it out save at reduced speed. While the movement was in progress all the still serviceable ordnance on the defences re-opened. This counter-attack, largely made with lighter ordnance, did no great material damage. Nor was it upon their guns that the defenders relied. In weight of fire they were outmatched. The reliance was upon floating mines. The channel, crowded with ships having the smallest room in which to manœuvre, was a conjuncture plainly favourable for launching and sending down with the current mines enough to make the whole of the waters dangerous. *Bouvet* encountered one of these deadly obstacles, drifted into Eren Keui Bay and sank with a loss of some 600 men. *Irresistible* was struck by another and fell out of the line with a heavy list. Despite the fire of the forts, most of her crew were before she foundered got off by the torpedo craft, an act of cool intrepidity in accord with the traditions of the Navy. Meanwhile *Ocean* had also been mined, and foundered rapidly, though most of her crew were either taken off or picked up. After these losses, and in view of the dangers of the Channel, the fleet was withdrawn. The attempt to force the Straits was not renewed.

There are always reasons for a failure. In this instance the plan of attack disclosed two mistakes. It was a mistake to try to manœuvre so many heavy ships in a narrow part of the channel. Again the ships had not been prepared against the dangers of mines. Where rapid steaming was of no moment the ships might have been thus equipped. Seemingly, so long as the channel had been cleared by mine-sweepers beforehand, that was considered unnecessary. It was a fatal oversight.

But these were minor points in comparison with the lack of a scheme of attack, which, while envisaging the real difficulties independently of theories, would have brought the whole power of the fleet to bear from the first. With the immense range of modern naval ord-

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nance the sixty-four and more heavy guns mounted by the ships could have been directed against the forts of the Narrows from the farther side of Gallipoli, and in the most destructive manner—by high-angle fire. Successive concentration shoots against particular defences could hardly have failed to demolish them. Not until this part of the work had been done ought an attack from within the Straits to have been attempted. The attack from within was essentially a second stage. And with the range of modern ordnance, the probabilities were that the entire fleet then proceeding up the Straits would have dealt successfully with temporary batteries.

The damage inflicted on the fleet by the fortifications in comparison with that inflicted by the fleet does not bear out the view that land forts are impregnable to sea attack, and it was not the strength of the Dardanelles defences which was the true cause of the failure.

## CHAPTER V

### GALLIPOLI : THE LANDING

Effects of the Naval failure—Arrival of General Sir Ian Hamilton—His decision endorsed—His plans—Incomplete reconnaissance—The project primarily naval—General Hamilton's difficulties—Hasty dispatch of the British troops—The dispositions for landing round the "Southern toe"—Their defects—Casson's landing at Eski Hissarlik Point—Koe's success at Y Beach—Its tactical importance—Loss of the Y Beach position—An opportunity missed—The landings at X, V and W Beaches—Faults of the operations—Attack of the Royal Fusiliers on Tekke Burnu—The "Lancashire Landing"—Tekke Burnu taken—The struggle at V Beach—A costly scheme—Landing of the Anzacs at Kaba Tepe—Its success.

EITHER, after the events of March 18, there should have been a renewal of the naval attack on effective lines, or the Gallipoli project should have been given up. Unfortunately, the contrary course was resolved upon. Not merely had the true causes of the naval failure escaped notice ; the fact was overlooked that a preliminary naval success alone could render military co-operation advisable.

General Sir Ian Hamilton, who had been appointed to the command of the military part of the expedition leaving London with his Staff on March 13, and travelling by way of Marseilles, had reached the base at Tenedos on March 17. The naval attack by the entire fleet had been fixed for the next day. The General was a spectator of it. Previously he had been informed of the course of operations up to that time by Admirals de Robeck and Guepratte, and had conferred with General d'Amade, commanding the French military contingent.

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After the attack he cabled to London his "reluctant deduction" that the whole of the troops under his command would be required to enable the fleet effectively to force the Dardanelles.

This decision the British Cabinet accepted.

To begin with, and before sending his cablegram, General Hamilton had to satisfy himself that the landing of a large force on the peninsula of Gallipoli was practicable. With that object in view, he sailed along its outward shores. His conclusion was that a landing was feasible at the extreme southern point.

Seen from the sea the peninsula appears to rise abruptly out of the blue waters of the *Ægean*, which is of great depth. The shores of Gallipoli are bluffs, not, it is true, of imposing height, but steep, and only broken here and there by ravines marking the beds of water-courses. The peninsula, in fact, is a tableland. Though it is fifty-two miles in extreme length, and varies in breadth from three miles to twelve, presenting therefore with sinuosities more than 150 miles of shore line, the places apparently adapted to landing troops are only a limited number of small coves, all commanded from adjacent bluffs. The one exception of any consequence is Suvla Bay, on the western side. The shore here is flat, and just beyond it is a small extent of plain, surrounding a salt marsh. General Hamilton at the time, however, rejected the idea of a landing at Suvla because both from either side and from inland the plain is overlooked by hills.

Of the seemingly feasible landing places, General Hamilton picked out six as probably suitable, all at or near the extreme southern point of the peninsula. Two faced the Straits; the others the open sea. The contemplated landings in the Straits were a small beach at the east end of Morto Bay and adjacent to Eski Hissarlik Point, and a stretch of sandy beach, 300 yards wide, just east of Sedd-el-Bahr. Overlooking the beach last named was a semicircle of rising ground. Morto Bay extended between the two points. Facing the sea it appeared feasible to land

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troops at a small sandy bay between Helles Burnu and Tekke Burnu ; at a break in the cliffs half a mile farther to the north and on the other side of Tekke Burnu ; at the mouth of a stream indenting the cliffs yet another two miles to the north ; at a gully again a mile and a half farther on, and overlooked by steep bluffs overgrown with scrub ; and finally besides these points, at the break now known as Anzac Cove, ten miles up the coast in the direction of Suvla.

As to the proposed landing places within the Straits, the disadvantage was that they could be commanded by the enemy's fire from the Asiatic shore. The others, General Hamilton perceived, had already been fortified. Trenches and lines of wire entanglement were plainly to be seen from on board ship, and through a glass he made out what appeared to be gun emplacements and infantry redoubts. But as he afterwards related in his despatch dealing with the landing operations, "of the full extent of these defences, and of the forces available to man them, there was no possibility of judging except by practical test."

It can hardly be said that such a reconnaissance was conclusive or satisfactory. General Hamilton evidently felt it was not. Two presumptions, however, were even at this time sufficiently clear ; first that the enemy expected a land attack in force, as his preparations showed, and next that he had available and at hand a force in his opinion strong enough to repel such an attack. No other conclusion could in the circumstances be justified, and the more so since no attempt at a diversion of the enemy strength had been made. The General's judgment seems to have been that his own covering forces on landing would forthwith have to face the resistance of some 34,000 Turkish troops backed by 100 guns. This was an under estimate, more especially as regards artillery. The enemy had, in fact, taken advantage of successive delays to establish on the peninsula a mass of heavy guns, and instead of 100 pieces he had more nearly three times that number. Moreover, he had hurried the transport and emplacement

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of this artillery, well knowing that bombardment by the Allied fleet in support of the land attack would render such work dangerous and difficult.

Why, in the meantime, was there no bombardment by the fleet of Maidos and Chanak and other nodal points, seeing that with the naval guns it was practicable from the Gulf of Saros, and seeing that it must have hampered, not merely the transport of hostile guns and munitions, but of supplies of all sorts, and of troops, and why was there in the meantime no such bombardment of the town of Gallipoli, and of the main road along the peninsula from north to south? The fact that this was not done, or at all events not effectually done, appears to be proof that, whether at home or on the spot, and even at this early stage, the error was committed of looking upon these operations as having become primarily military with the fleet as a support.

It is but just to point out that General Hamilton was placed in a difficulty which he was well warranted in saying had no precedent in military history, and unhappily it was a difficulty over which he had no control. There was a lack of unified authority; no commander invested with power over the whole proceedings as an amphibious undertaking. The Navy is in British tradition the senior Service, and it is at variance with that tradition to place an Admiral under the orders of a General. There is no need to infer that the two officers, Vice-Admiral de Robeck and General Hamilton, did not work cordially together. They did. But was that enough?

Difficult in any case, and there is no more risky operation in war, the landing was thus handicapped by insufficient reconnaissance; by lack of necessary information; but most of all by failure to check the enemy's preparations. Sir Ian Hamilton proposed to get out of the difficulty by throwing his troops ashore *en masse*, and as far as possible suddenly and by surprise. This, indeed, was the only way out short of giving up the attempt.

But to do that another necessity had to be met. The

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troops, sent out from England as they were ready, and with a haste which was in truth a loss of speed, had to be sorted on arrival. To do so on the Island of Mudros, already occupied by the Australian contingent, dispatched with the same haste from Egypt, proved out of the question. The transports, waiting to disembark their men, were therefore with the approval of the authorities at Home ordered from Mudros to Egypt, and the troops landed at Alexandria. Unfortunately, the necessity involved another month's delay, and that month in the enemy's preparations made all the difference. The time sufficient to take the British troops to Egypt, re-sort them and bring them back, was time enough for the Turks to transport to Gallipoli whatever reinforcements they might consider advisable. In that respect they were accepting no risks. If we, on our part, under-judged the difficulties, they did not under-judge British troops. The Germans had by this learned more than enough in France to be tempted into any such blunder. The one marvel of the matter, indeed, is that the British troops surpassed even this estimate of their prowess, and that a hostile strength calculated with certainty to drive them back into the sea did not do it. There are very few precedents in military history for a force making good its footing in the circumstances against more than its own numbers.

The British troops landed at Alexandria on March 24. It was not until April 23 that the force designed to cover the landing, the 29th Division, left Mudros for the landing beaches. Well have the 29th Division been named the "Immortal." They were to undertake a feat of arms next to impossible, and, in fact, considered by the enemy utterly impossible.

Yet these intrepid men, faced with that duty, never flinched. The leading of a forlorn hope could hardly have been more desperate. The enemy's defences had been consistently strengthened, though we had guns enough to have pounded them to powder. Preliminary bombardment—as distinguished from that covering the actual landing—seems to have been decided against on

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the ground that it would disclose the points picked out for the operation. But those points could have been no secret to the enemy in any event, and bombardment might have been employed to *assist* a surprise.

Apparently another reason was that nothing was very definitely known to the fleet concerning the intended military operations until April 10, when General Hamilton with his Staff returned to Mudros from Egypt. Then committees, composed both of naval and of military officers, were formed to work out the details of the proposed landings. This working out occupied another eleven or twelve days. On April 22 the details had all been determined upon. The landing of so large a force at one time was of course a complicated proceeding.

The plan of the landing contemplated in the first place and at daybreak on April 25 throwing troops ashore simultaneously at the small beach adjacent to Eski Hissarlik Point on the eastern end of Morto Bay (S Beach) and at the mouth of the stream which, as already described, formed an indentation in the bluffs two miles to the north of Tekke Burnu (Y Beach). These landings, however, were intended to be no more than a covering for the main operation. The two points, it will be observed, were at the extremes of the line of landing places picked out as practicable. A preliminary attack at these outside points would, in the opinion of General Hamilton, have the effect at once of protecting the flanks of the main landing force, of disseminating, as he expressed it, the troops of the enemy and of interrupting the arrival of enemy reinforcements.

There is a main road running from Maidos on the Narrows, south-westward along the toe of the peninsula to Sedd-el-Bahr, its extreme promontory. This road passes just to the west of the height of Achi Baba and from it as it descends towards Sedd-el-Bahr there is observation of the seaward approaches to all the five landing places from the beach at Eski Hissarlik Point on the one side to the indentation at Gurkha bluffs (Y Beach) on the other. In the circumstances it was

## BRITISH CAMPAIGNS IN THE NEARER EAST

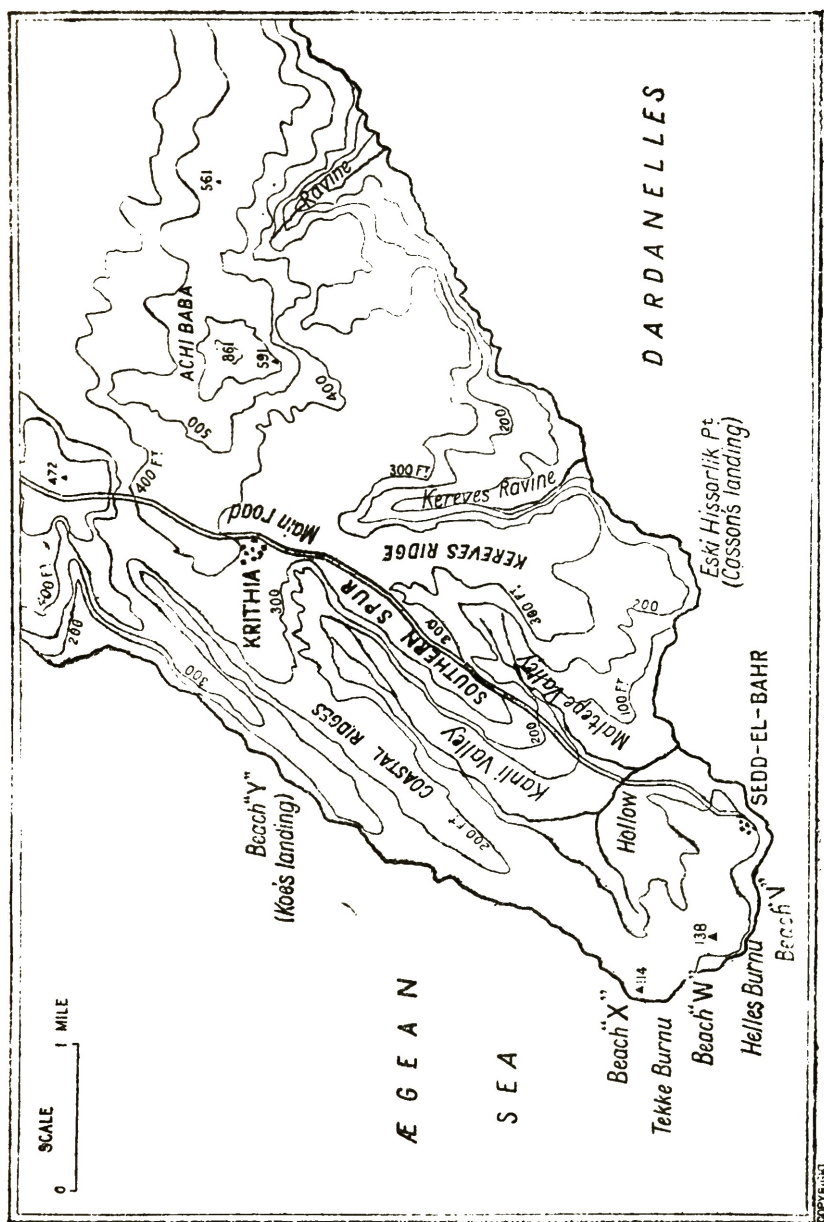
expecting much to suppose that the enemy would be disconcerted by preliminary feints.

The real means of hindering the movement of the enemy's reinforcements was by naval fire to destroy Maidos and the roads and road junctions leading to and from it, as well as the light railway connecting Kalid Bahr on the Narrows with Sedd-el-Bahr. This light railway passed to the east side of Achi Baba, as the main road passed to the west. Chanak also should have been destroyed. With the enormous armament of the fleet enemy movements on any part of the peninsula south of Maidos might, it is not unreasonable to conclude, have been rendered extremely difficult and hazardous. The extreme distance across the peninsula south of Achi Baba from the Ægean to the Dardanelles is less than five miles.

The plan, however, was to preface the landings by a thirty minutes' bombardment of the defences. This was hardly adequate in any event, and more than ever inadequate if the theory of the inutility of naval attack on land defences had the justification attributed to it.

The covering force had arrived from Egypt off the Island of Tenedos on the morning of April 24. During the afternoon of that day they were transferred to the lighter warships and mine sweepers, in which it had been decided that they were to approach the shore. Each towing a number of cutters and other small boats, these ships at midnight slipped their cables, and under the escort of the third squadron of the fleet seven battleships and four cruisers, steamed towards the rendezvous at Cape Helles. General Hamilton records that the cables were slipped silently, and that the passage was made under slow steam. These were advisable precautions, but if there existed any idea that the enemy was being taken by surprise it was, as events proved, without foundation.

As timed, the rendezvous was reached just before dawn. There was no wind. The sea was as unruffled as a surface of glass. Light mists hung motionless over



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the Gallipoli bluffs. Ashore no sign of activity, or even of life.

The battleships and cruisers of the squadron, under the command of Rear-Admiral R. E. Wemyss, took up their positions and at the signal opened fire simultaneously. From Gallipoli the enemy answered with not a shot. Some batteries on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles alone indicated that he was on the alert.

While the bombardment was in progress the troops detailed for the preliminary landings were transferred to the boats. The landing at Eski Hissarlik Point was entrusted to the South Wales Borderers, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Casson. Here the chief obstacle proved to be the current. Two hours elapsed before the Corps were all ashore, but the landing, covered by a heavy naval fire, was effected with a loss of not more than fifty killed and wounded, and Lieut.-Colonel Casson was able to push up from the beach and, seizing some high ground close to De Totts Battery, to establish himself there.

At the Gurkha bluffs (Y Beach) the landing party consisted of the King's Own Scottish Borderers and the Plymouth (Marine) Battalion of the Royal Naval Division, the whole under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Koe. The bluffs, at this point precipitous, proved to be undefended, and it was surmised, evidently correctly, that the Turks had judged a landing here to be out of the question. But the face of the cliffs is broken by various small cracks or gullies, and up these the men from the boats swarmed in Indian file. Fortunate in finding the higher ground deserted, they were able, before being attacked, to haul up reserves of ammunition, food and water. Not more than half a mile away the Turks were lying in wait strongly entrenched round the cove where a landing *had* been anticipated. The landing at Y Beach was supported by the battleship *Goliath*.

It appears to have formed part of the plan of the British operations that the small body of troops under the command of Koe, and those thrown ashore at Eski

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Hissarlik Point, should get into touch with each other. They were separated by nearly five miles of country held by strong hostile forces, and to effect a contact would have to cross and get astride of the Turks' main line of communication with Sedd-el-Bahr. Extravagant as this notion was, Koe made an attempt to carry out his instructions. Since Casson meanwhile had all he could do to beat off the attacks upon him and maintain his ground which, though isolated during that time, he did for two days, the interposition of the Turkish force which had been watching the presumed landing place near Gurkha bluffs frustrated the manœuvre. Koe was obliged to withdraw to the head of the bluffs, and to improvise defences. Time, however, had been lost, and his men were fatigued. If, having drawn away the enemy from the cove they had been watching, advantage had been taken of that circumstance to throw another force ashore at that point, the manœuvre would have served a valuable purpose. A strong position might have been established on the enemy's flank, close to Krithia, but the landing arrangements elsewhere had been so elaborated that it was not thought advisable to vary them, even though this favourable contingency had arisen.

As might have been anticipated from this beginning, the sequel was unfortunate. On the afternoon of that day (April 25) the Turks threw a strong force against Koe's position from the village of Krithia, on the south-western slope of Achi Baba, and the opportunity of supporting or reinforcing Koe's troops not having been taken, he was attacked in overwhelming strength. That afternoon the assault began, backed by a converging fire of hostile field artillery. Despite that, one attack after another was beaten off. Very little aid was rendered by the guns of the fleet. The reason assigned is that the country between the bluffs and Achi Baba forms a wide hollow. Seemingly with their flat trajectory it was thought that the naval guns to clear the bluffs must fire beyond the enemy lines. But why was not high-angle fire resorted to? It is

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manifest that the enemy surmised that this tiny British force was "in the air," and he was resolved to destroy it, for the position it occupied was important—much more important than those marked out as the main landing places.

Night fell and still the fight continued. Fresh relays of Turkish troops came into action. The attacks were led by parties of bombers. In one of these attacks there was in the midst of the assaulting column a pony carrying a machine-gun. The animal was led alive across the British trenches. In the centre of the position, and in a darkness lit only by the flashes of guns and rifles, amid the roar and confusion of a hand-to-hand struggle, the machine-gun suddenly opened fire. A party of British soldiers promptly closed in with the bayonet. In a matter of seconds the machine-gun team were annihilated. With the bayonet the Turks were driven out. But they came on again, and though repulsed, brought forward fresh troops. So the fight went on throughout the night. When day broke the British still held their trenches, filled with their own and the enemy's dead and dying, and littered with all the *débris* of the battle. They held on, worn out but grim, and so terrible that the enemy had at last for the time relinquished his effort to oust them. They had been reduced, however, to half their strength. The gallant Koe himself had fallen early in the struggle from a wound that unhappily proved mortal. In the circumstances, only one of two courses was open; either to throw ashore reinforcements, or to evacuate. The first, and better, course, was unfortunately, not adopted. Nothing, therefore, remained for it but to re-embark. Four warships, *Goliath*, *Dublin*, *Amethyst* and *Sapphire*, were told off for the duty. A rearguard of the King's Own Scottish Borderers was formed to cover the withdrawal, and kept the enemy at bay while, with the help of naval beach parties, who displayed great gallantry, first the wounded, then the munitions, or what was left of them, then the stores, were passed down the steep gullies to the boats. The men followed, and last

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the rearguard, fighting step by step the enemy, who now sought to gain the tops of the bluffs in order to snipe at the boats as they pulled off shore.

This episode had proved that with the peculiar formation of the bluffs along this coast—a ridge interposed between an inland depression on the one side and the sea on the other—it was in truth a safer landing where the cliffs, though perpendicular, were broken by narrow gullies affording an ascent at an angle, than to get ashore at beaches obstructed by wire entanglements and other devices, and each commanded by an arc of defences on the higher land. Where Koe's force had got ashore without a single casualty, owing to the preference of this point to the defended cove, it is evident that, the gullies secured, other troops could follow. So long as the enemy could be kept off the tops of the bluffs such troops would in landing be sheltered by the cliffs from his fire. And manifestly the enemy realised at once upon the apparition of Koe's men that here had been left a dangerous loophole ; the more dangerous because it was not more than a mile from Krithia and the main road and threatened the whole defence of the southern point of the peninsula.

Hence the heavy sacrifices he made to repair his oversight. That very fact ought to have demonstrated the importance of holding on to such an acquisition. Koe promptly reinforced, and pressure applied at this point, what are now called the main landings might have been carried out with no more than moderate difficulty and expense. General Hamilton, commenting on this affair, observed, quite justly, that " the plucky stand made at Y Beach detained heavy columns of the enemy from arriving at the southern end of the peninsula during a very touch and go struggle." Precisely, but the heavy columns detained might have been still heavier. Fortune had offered a chance which, immersed in the execution of his plans, the General proved unprepared to seize.

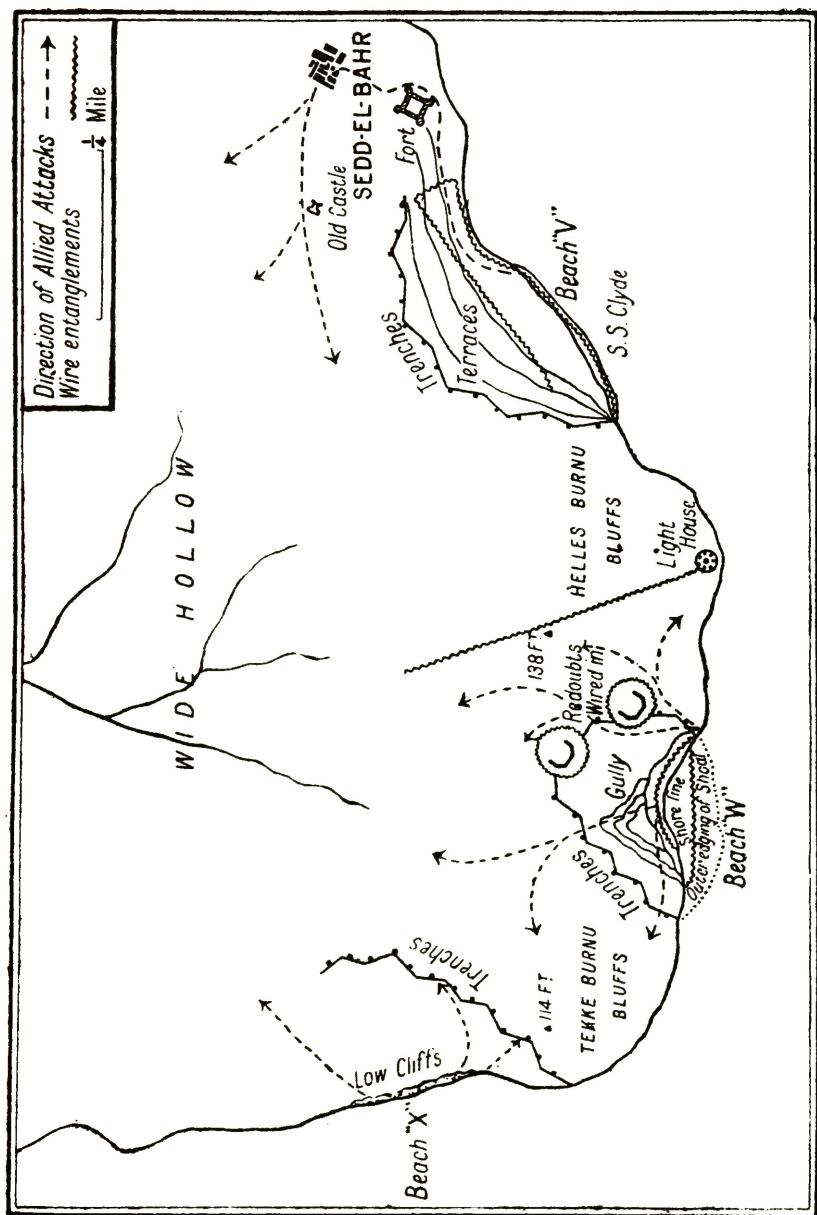
This unpreparedness seemingly was related to the idea that a force landed at different, though contiguous,

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points along a coast is by that disposition divided, and General Hamilton's aim was primarily to keep his troops together, and form a continuous front extending across the peninsula from coast to coast. *But a force dependent upon communications by sea though put ashore at different points is not by that fact divided even in a military sense.* Command of the sea constitutes a connecting link. Converging, yet, because of sea command, connected, attacks from different points would have been much more difficult for the enemy to resist. It would have been the less easy for him to discover from which particular quarter the next blow was to be delivered, and the result would have given greater freedom in attack because offering wider alternatives.

We can now pass on to the story of the main landings at the three beaches selected for that purpose.

At the extreme south-western point of Gallipoli there are two adjacent promontories, each presenting on its seaward face a bold bluff. One, looking towards the *Ægean*, is named by the Turks Tekke Burnu ; the other, just to the south-east and facing towards the entrance of the Dardanelles, Helles Burnu. Tekke Burnu is 114, Helles Burnu 138 feet high. On what may be called the outer side of Tekke Burnu, fronting the sea, is a strip of shore, X Beach, some 600 feet in length, and 30 feet in depth on the average, and behind the strip of beach a low cliff. Again, between Tekke Burnu and Helles Burnu is another strip (W Beach) rather more than 1,000 feet in length, and varying in breadth from 35 to 120 feet. The depth is greatest in the centre, for at this point there is a break in the cliffs formed by a gully and at the foot of the break a small range of sand dunes. At either end of the beach, where it narrows, the cliffs become precipitous. Once more on the farther side of Helles Burnu, facing the Dardanelles, is a third strip of shore (V Beach) also rather more than 1,000 feet in length, but narrow and the width, nearly uniform, not being more than 30 feet. This beach, a fine sand, is nearly level. Its background consists of a depression rising in grass grown and roughly semi-



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circular terraces like an amphitheatre, to a height of 100 feet. At the foot of the amphitheatre the ground falls abruptly to the level of the sand, so that, looked at from the sand, the drop of about four feet in level gives the beach the appearance of being surrounded by a low wall.

The two bluffs with the strip of beach between them and the beach on the outer side of each are the features of this part of the coast.

Such a position was naturally capable of a strong defence, but in the absence of a supporting fleet, and dependent only upon land communications, the defence had a serious weak point. Access to the position could be cut off by naval bombardment, were that means resorted to. Not only could the whole position be plastered with heavy shells, it might be effectively barraged. That mode of attack, however, does not appear to have been resorted to. Further, until it had been shown, when it came to military operations, that there were no means of turning the position, to plan a frontal assault was inadvisable. The episode at Y Beach had disclosed that there were such means. The conduct of the operations therefore had three defects. First, there was the incompleteness of the reconnaissances and information. Plans based upon incomplete information must always be more or less haphazard and as the instructions to Casson and Koe showed, there was at Headquarters no reliable idea of the enemy's strength. Next the fire of the fleet had not done all it was capable of doing. Thirdly, no measures which can be termed effective had been taken to disperse the enemy's force at the intended point of attack.

The defences were formidable. For example, along the margin of the beach on the farther side of Helles Burnu (Y Beach) there was a specially strong and heavy wire entanglement, and across the amphitheatre forming the background of that beach ran another and similar entanglement, while just above and beyond it were lines of hostile trenches armed with "pom-poms." A traverse entanglement also ran near the eastern end of

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the beach from the margin uphill to the wire covering the Turkish trenches. The three lines of obstruction formed, as it were, three sides of a parallelogram, and a sort of compound, which the enemy plainly intended to convert into an abattoir. As for the beach between the two headlands (W Beach), there was a barbed wire network just below the surface of the water, and a second entanglement of considerable breadth close to the water's edge. Both faces of the gully besides had been hollowed out into caves, in each of which was a machine-gun. Again, on the top of Helles Burnu were two infantry redoubts, and round each a wire entanglement 20 feet broad. A wire entanglement, too, had been carried along the top of the bluff to its seaward edge, marked by the lighthouse. The intention was to prevent any British force moving from W Beach on the one side of the bluff to V Beach on the other. These defences at the time of the attack were standing very much as they had been made.

The beach on the outer side of Tekke Burnu (X Beach) had also been fortified, but the Turks do not appear to have expected a very sharp attack at this point, probably judging that the line of low cliffs would be a sufficient obstruction. They were evidently concerned chiefly with W and V Beaches, because of the break in the cliffs in the one instance and the semicircular depression in the other.

In fact, however, the line of low cliffs at X Beach proved rather an advantage to the landing force than otherwise. The troops detailed to be thrown ashore at daybreak here were the Royal Fusiliers, and the arrangement was that they were to be towed ashore on pontoon rafts from H.M.S. *Implacable* and in two parties, each one-half the battalion, accompanied by a beach working detachment of the Royal Naval Division (Anson Battalion). To cover these landings *Implacable* stood close inshore, and with her whole armament in action swept the tops of the cliffs and the slopes and summit of Tekke Burnu. Thus supported, the troops got ashore with only slight losses. On Tekke Burnu

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the Turks had entrenched themselves in positions from which they could sweep the beach end on. Consequently, the Fusiliers at once moved forward to attack the enemy's trenches on the bluff, and carried them. Strong Turkish reinforcements, however, speedily put in an appearance, and the Fusiliers were obliged to give ground. While the fighting was in progress the remainder of the 87th Brigade (two battalions) under the command of Brigadier-General Marshall, had been put ashore. In conjunction with the Fusiliers, these troops by the end of the day had cleared the slope of Tekke Burnu, and the country beyond the low cliffs to a depth of half a mile. On the lines thus established they entrenched themselves. Though wounded during the engagement General Marshall continued in command.

The beach between Tekke Burnu and Helles Burnu has been called the "Lancashire Landing" because the troops told off to lead the "forlorn hope" there were the 1st Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers, under the command of Major Bishop. The four companies of the battalion were distributed into thirty-two ship's cutters, and the cutters attached by fours to eight picket boats. The picket boats with their tows made for the shore in line abreast.

It was now six o'clock and full daylight, and the whole movement was plainly visible to the enemy. Nevertheless, as the picket boats headed for shore not a shot was fired. On both sides ominous silence. The warships covering the landing were standing closer in behind the tows; the enemy reserving his fusillade.

The "Lancashire Landing" is fronted by a stretch of shallow water, and as already noted the enemy had taken advantage of that fact to put down submerged entanglements. Since, owing to the shoal, the picket boats could not approach the shore because of their draft, the tows had to be cast off and the cutters separated to pull in. It was a race for life. Twenty-four, carrying three companies of the battalion, headed straight on; eight others, carrying the remaining company, and with them Brigadier-General Hare command-

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ing the 88th Brigade, pulled towards the cliffs of Tekke Burnu. A few moments elapsed at the outside before the first among the twenty-four cutters was brought up against the underwater obstructions. Then from all sides—from the bluffs, the gully and the sand dunes—the enemy poured in a hurricane of shot. The men-of-war opened at the same time with their armament of every calibre. The wire entanglement along the beach was slashed with shell, the gully became an inferno of bursting high explosives; the sand dunes were searched and raked. Amid this tornado the Lancashire Fusiliers, working like men possessed, hacked their way through the submerged obstructions. Many fell, but the rest set foot on the sand. The broad belt of visible entanglement there had still to be negotiated. It was a feat that seemed humanly impossible. Fortunately, however, the company which had steered towards the cliffs found itself to a certain extent sheltered from the enemy's fire, and, able from this position to enfilade the beach, made it too perilous for the Turks to throw forward their forces. The hostile fire had been checked by that of the ships but not subdued.

As the manœuvre of collecting under the cliffs at one end of the beach was found to afford protection, so those of the battalion who were still afoot gathered either there, or under the cliffs at the farther end. From these positions, the companies having been reformed, they proceeded, after a breathing space, to assault the Turkish trenches. At the Tekke Burnu end there were three lines of these barring access to the height. One line, however, was carried after another. Meanwhile at this end of the beach, the obstructions having been demolished, more troops of the 88th Brigade had been landed and pushed forward. Between the lines of trenches the enemy had laid land mines, which he exploded. None of these devices checked the impetus of the assault. By ten in the forenoon the defences on the Tekke Burnu side of the gully had been cleared. A little before noon the top of Tekke Burnu was gained, and a junction effected with the troops of the 87th

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Brigade, who had come up from the other side. The bluff had been won.

Under the cliffs at the farther end of the beach meanwhile the smaller body of the Lancashire Fusiliers found themselves held up by the wire entanglements and too weak to force a way through. Helles Burnu and its approaches were therefore laid under a heavy bombardment, and covered by this a battalion of the Worcesters was landed. At two in the afternoon they advanced to the assault. Here also the defence proved to have been shaken. Two hours later the hill with its redoubts was in the hands of the assaulting troops. The British line was pushed as far as the lighthouse.

Unfortunately, the attempt to land at V Beach on the farther side of Helles Burnu had not prospered, though intended to be the most important of the three disembarkations. There were told off for it the Dublin Fusiliers, the Munster Fusiliers, half a battalion of the Hampshires, the West Riding Field Company, and other details.

The arrangements for putting these forces ashore were first that three companies of the Dublins were to be towed in boats, and next that the collier, *River Clyde*, having the remainder of the troops between decks, was to stand close in shore. Through large openings cut in her sides for the purpose the men were to pass by means of gangways on to lighters which she had in tow. Having reached land and discharged their freights, the lighters were to be so placed as to form a floating bridge between the ship and the sand. Finally, when this disembarkation had been managed, the rest of the covering force was to be brought ashore in tows from the attendant warships.

Much reliance seems to have been placed on this scheme. It did not work as anticipated.

*River Clyde* reached the beach simultaneously with the first boats, which were delayed by the current, and as at the "Lancashire Landing," the enemy held his fire until the leading boat touched ground. Then the terraces of the amphitheatre blazed out, and the narrow strip of sand was lashed from end to end by a storm of

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shot. Those of the Dublins who survived broke through the entanglement at the water's edge and dashed for the low wall or escarpment at the foot of the depression. The boats were shot to pieces.

And owing to the Dardanelles current, running at a steady four knots per hour, the placing of the lighters in position between *River Clyde* and the shore proved no easy matter. The enemy's fire was naturally concentrated largely upon the man at work, and every man of the first naval working party went down. Another party, however, at once took their places. Commander Unwin, R.N., captain of the *River Clyde*, leaving the ship, stood under a heavy fire, up to his waist in water. Eventually the work was carried through.

On its completion a company of the Munsters were mustered to dash across the extemporised gangway for shore. To gain the beach with a run was a question of seconds at most. The gangway, nevertheless, was swept by fire from right, left and centre. Most of the company were killed or wounded. Unfortunately, between the first and second lighter there was a gap which the men had to negotiate by jumping. The second lighter also did not reach the beach.

All the same, the effort was persisted in, and a second company of the Munsters mustered. As they crossed at the double, the moorings of the lighters gave way. This has been attributed entirely to the current, but it was probably also due in part to the strain of rapid movement by a mass of men, and the cutting of the moorings by shot. At all events, whilst the "bridge" was crowded with this second contingent, those on the lighter nearest the shore suddenly found themselves adrift. Every moment carried them farther into deep water, and yet to stay on the lighters, a target for the enemy's bullets, was to be shot for a certainty. Many of the men consequently, though loaded with their equipment, leaped from sheer desperation into the sea. Some contrived to reach the shore. Most, weighed down by their packs, were drowned.

Again, though shot and shell were being poured in,

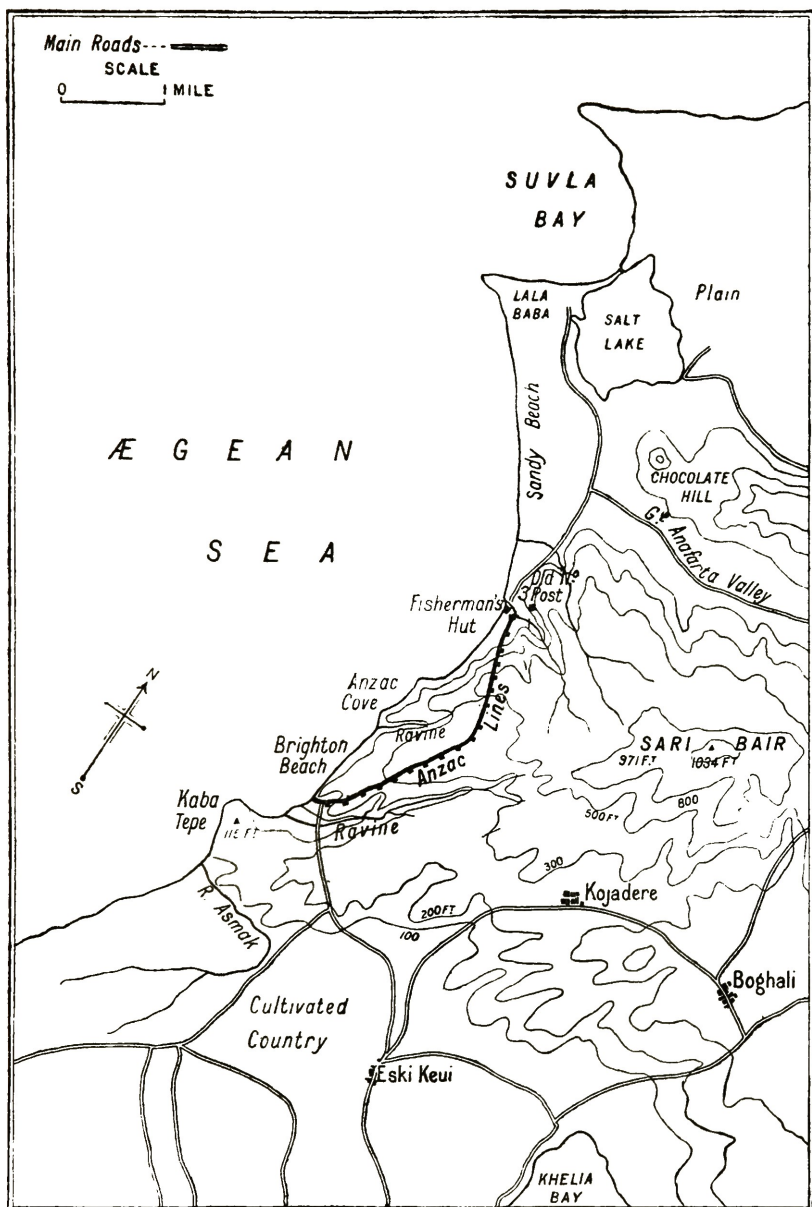
## BRITISH CAMPAIGNS IN THE NEARER EAST

the lighters were hauled into position, and refixed, and a third company of the Munsters mustered for the rush. By this time, however, the enemy had not only concentrated machine-gun and "pom-pom" fire upon the gangway, but field guns. Bursts of shrapnel fell upon the gangway like hail. The "bridge" held, but only a few out of the gallant company who attempted to pass over survived.

This "plan" for what had been presumed would be a rapid landing, formed apparently without duly taking the current into consideration, was, it should now have been evident, a failure; impracticable and murderous at the same time. There was a suspension of the attempts, but after a while they were renewed with a contemplated dash by the half-battalion of Hampshires, and the lighters were crowded with men of that corps when a second time the moorings gave way. As the lighters drifted off the troops had to lie down on them. There was nothing else for it. Even so, they were helpless targets. Among them were Brigadier-General Napier and Captain Costeker, his brigade major. Both were killed.

So far not more than one-half the intended covering force had been put ashore, and of those again half had become casualties. Further landing operations here were in the circumstances not persisted in.

Since it would be as difficult and as costly to get the men who had landed embarked again as it had proved to throw them ashore, all that could be done was to prevent the enemy from coming down on to the beach in a counter-attack. That, happily, was feasible, because of the machine-guns mounted on the deck of *River Clyde* and protected by sandbags. At nightfall there was a bright moonlight, but though on that account the enemy's fire was still formidable, *River Clyde* was enabled to discharge the troops remaining aboard. In the course of the night several attempts were made to clear the ruined fort of Sedd-el-Bahr, and the outskirts of the ruined village. They were failures. The men were fagged out.



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During that night the survivors of this disastrous operation crouched along the side of the beach under the shelter of the four-foot escarpment which was their only cover. They consisted of the remnants of the Dublins and the Munsters, and two companies of the Hampshires. The latter regiment had lost its commandant, Colonel Carrington Smith. Few, in fact, of the senior officers of any of these three corps were left, and the command was taken over for the time by Lieut.-Colonel Doughty-Wylie, and Lieut.-Colonel Williams of the Headquarters Staff, who had landed from *River Clyde*, and have been mentioned in despatches for their conspicuous contempt of danger and their efforts to keep up the spirits of the men.

The story of the disembarkations on Gallipoli is completed by that of the Anzacs. To the number of 4,000 the covering troops of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps left Mudros Bay on the afternoon of April 24. Fifteen hundred had been placed on board *Queen*, *London* and *Prince of Wales*, three of the escorting warships of the second squadron of the fleet commanded by Rear-Admiral C. F. Thursby. The remaining 2,500 were carried on transports accompanied by six destroyers. To the battleships *Triumph* and *Majestic*, and the cruiser *Bacchante* had been allotted the duty of covering the landing.

The place picked out for throwing the troops ashore was a point a mile to the north of Kaba Tepe. This part of the coast is rugged, rising abruptly out of the sea, but at the point just alluded to there is a limited stretch of beach, narrow, but judged wide enough. It was hoped that this operation might take the enemy by surprise, and that the strip of beach might not be fortified.

At about one o'clock in the morning of April 25 the flotilla, consisting of five battleships, one cruiser, eight destroyers, the *Ark Royal* seaplane ship, the *Manica*, balloon ship, and fifteen trawlers, arrived off the rendezvous. A calm night, and a smooth sea, but a bright moon. The ships kept well off the coast. At one and the same time the business began of transferring the

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men on the warships to the boats and the men on the transports to the destroyers.

It was carried through silently, swiftly, and without a hitch, and by half-past two, all these preparations having been made, the squadron with the destroyers and tows stood towards land, making a speed of five knots. An hour later the tows were ordered to make for shore. The destroyers, kept back because more conspicuous objects on the water, and able owing to their speed to catch up, were sent off after a forty minutes' interval.

Whether through the set of the current or the difficulty of identifying features of the coast in the moonlight, the strip of beach on which the landing took place was not that set out in Headquarters' plans. It was another and a narrower strip. But the mistake, if it can so be called, was on the whole fortunate. The selected beach, as might have been expected, was watched; that where the landing occurred was not. Again the latter, though narrower, was on that account safer, since the cliffs offered a better shelter from hostile fire. At the northern end was a steep gully running into the hills; at the southern end, a narrow and deep ravine its sides overgrown with scrub. The interlying cliffs were high, forming, in fact, the seaward face of a bold spur looking as though it had been abruptly broken off. By advancing up the gully and the ravine it would be practicable to seize this spur, and in that case the strip would become a fairly secure landing place.

Approaching the shore in silence, and at moonset, when darkness had fallen on the sea, the men on the tows and destroyers were close in before signs of the enemy were perceived. Then in the dim light what appeared to be a battalion of Turks were seen running along the shore, with the evident object of intercepting the boats. Most probably these enemy troops, watching the beach where the landing was anticipated, had seen the ships outlined at sea against the moonlight, and observing that the tows were not after all making for the expected point, had hastily shifted their ground.

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On board the boats the same silence as before ; the same perfect order. Very soon the rip-rap of rifle shots rang out from beneath the cliffs ; a fluctuation of flashes along the shore ; the " ping " of bullets and their splash in the water. A number of men in the boats were hit ; the others set their teeth. Not a shot in reply ; not a word spoken ; not a move on the part of any man not wounded. Bayonets were ready fixed. The numerous boats, urged at their fastest, raced towards the narrow shore almost in line. Almost in mass the men leaped from them, and in a mass and as with one impulse they charged home with the cold steel. With the sheer cliffs behind them the Turks were caught in a trap. Those of the enemy who could fled up the gully and the ravine, the Anzacs hot upon their heels. It was no longer an attack ; it had become a man-hunt. After his experience on the beach the enemy made no attempt to stand. The mere appearance of these stalwart southern warriors was the signal for flight. Not only was the spur above the landing place cleared ; a succession of ridges to right and left were carried at lightning speed. The rugged moorland country was swept bare of the foe from a point two miles north of the landing place to a point nearly as far to the south.

These covering troops consisted of the 3rd Brigade of the Australian Division. They were commanded by Colonel Sinclair MacLagan, D.S.O.

## CHAPTER VI

### GALLIPOLI : THE BATTLE FOR KRITHIA

Turkish attacks upon the Australian and New Zealand force—Strategical importance of the Kaba Tepe position—Misjudgments in the British dispositions—Adverse effects on the campaign—First move forward from the southern landing places—Errors in tactics—Turkish counter-attacks—Disadvantages of the British position—The battle of May 5—Costliness of frontal assaults—The Anzac force divided—Partial British success before Krithia—Anzacs reduced to the defensive—Review of the campaign to May 6—Its mistakes.

THE landing of the Australian covering troops was speedily followed by that of the 1st and 2nd Brigades of the same Division. By 2 o'clock the following afternoon (April 26), there had, thanks to the efficiency of the naval support, been thrown ashore a force of 12,000 men, with two batteries of Indian Mountain Artillery. These operations were carried out under the command of Lieut.-General Sir W. R. Birdwood. In every sense the selection of that able and distinguished officer for the command of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was a fortunate one.

Naturally the Turks hastened to attack the Australian troops while the landing was in progress and before the guns and other equipment could be got ashore, and early on April 26 they had gathered in strength, arriving by forced marches during the night. The reinforcement apparently consisted at this time of a full division, mustering 20,000 men. The Australian covering troops were spaced out along a semi-circle of posts, as yet, save for the light pieces already mentioned, unsupported

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by field artillery. To assist the attack upon the Australian line the enemy planted batteries to the left of the landing beach so as to enfilade boats as they approached the shore, and he opened upon the transports with heavy guns. The ships, which had stood in close to shore, were on that account obliged to steam farther out, and that of course prolonged the landing and increased its risks. So anxious, indeed, was the enemy to prevent the landing that he opened fire also across the peninsula from a naval squadron in the Narrows. The battleships of Rear-Admiral Thursby's squadron replied, and all the while the landing was in progress this long range naval duel against targets invisible to either side and directed from the air, went on. At the finish, the British ships, armed with the heavier guns, had the best of it. The Turkish squadron, which included *Goeben* and *Breslau*, was obliged to withdraw.

In spite of all, the landing arrangements worked with surprisingly little confusion, and the disembarkation went on rapidly.

On rapidity depended success, for already the battle ashore was in full blast. The Turkish attack had opened at 11 a.m. (April 26). After the Australian line had been severely searched with shrapnel, the hostile infantry advanced to the assault. The onset was against the whole line simultaneously. At the beginning of the action the Australian covering troops were outnumbered by at least eight to one. But they were practically without an exception dead shots, and the power of the rifle in the hands of skilful and fearless men proved crushing. The broken and confused Turkish units, however, were forthwith rallied by their German officers, and again thrown forward.

Meanwhile, as men were landed they were on the instant pushed forward up the gully and the ravine and took their places in the line. The effort of the enemy to barrage those exits was unavailing. He had himself now to stand a crashing bombardment from the warships, which both hampered his re-assemblies and played havoc with his batteries. His second attack, as it

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proved, was directed more especially against the left or northern sector of the Australian position, held by the 3rd Brigade, though it extended to part of the posts formed by the 2nd Brigade. Here, apparently, the enemy thought he had found a weak spot. It is true that, under the weight of the assault, the 2nd Brigade began to retire; but the broken ground, thickly overgrown with scrub, while to a certain extent it favoured the Turks, also favoured prudent defensive tactics. And though the line bent, it did not break, for when the enemy followed up, coming on in depth, since his earlier general assault in shallow formation had proved a failure, he had as hot a reception as before. On his retirement the Australians followed up. For three hours the fight swayed backwards and forwards. Finally, at 3 in the afternoon, the enemy gave the effort up. The country, strewn with his dead and wounded, especially where the machine-guns had caught him in close formation, testified to his casualties. He gave it up because, though the attack had been pressed with determination, the Australian line was found steadily to be stiffening, and the newcomers as keen in the fray as the first men. In the course of the action the 9th and 10th battalions charged and spiked a battery of Krupp guns.

German stubbornness, however, was not thus to be denied. After a breathing space of two hours, during which the Australians were hard at work contriving cover, a powerful Turkish column was once more signalled as on the move. The point of attack was the same as in the afternoon. As it doubled forward the assaulting mass suffered heavily, but it was driven on by its officers, and the contending forces came to grips. Outnumbered though they were, the 3rd Brigade more than held their own. Though the struggle lasted for an hour or more amid a hellish uproar, the result really was never doubtful. The Turks, while naturally brave, found themselves shot and bayoneted out of all proportion. They first wavered, then broke, and finally ran.

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Having attacked in breadth and depth and failed both ways, the enemy now once more changed his tactics. Waiting until after nightfall, he threw forward one local assault after another in order to harass and wear down the defending troops and hinder the consolidation of their lines. Finding that, with the rifle, the Turkish infantry were no match for these invaders, some German commander hit upon the idea of an onset with the bayonet without any preliminary fire. In the moonlight and through the scrub, covering themselves by the folds in the ground, a force of Turks stole up to the lines of the 8th Brigade, and then bounded forward with a yell. But the charge was not the surprise they had imagined. A blaze of fire at close quarters bowled over many. The rest were dispatched or dispersed.

Nor had the consolidation of the Australian position been materially interfered with. These Turkish troops had been pushed through the hills, certain apparently of driving the invaders into the sea. So far from being driven into the sea, the Australians were firmly established in a rough half-circle extending from a mile north of the Kaba Tepe headland on the one side to the high ground overlooking Fisherman's Hut on the other.

The difficulties, by no means light, of bringing up ammunition, water and supplies and distributing them to the men in the line were now tackled. Since yet more Turkish reinforcements had put in an appearance, and persistent and harassing assaults were continued during two more days and nights, four battalions of the Royal Naval Division were landed both as handymen, in which capacity they did yeoman service, and as reliefs in the line.

The prompt and heavy Turkish attack upon the Anzac force had a distinct significance. This part of the Gallipoli coast from the point where Koe's troops had landed northwards to Suvla Bay was, for the enemy, the sensitive sector. It was evident that, assuming the intention of the British to be in the first place the capture of Achi Baba, and the domination from that

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height of the broad depression extending across the peninsula just to the north of the mountain, Achi Baba would be much more difficult to hold against a frontal combined with a flank attack than against a frontal attack alone. Indeed, it was highly problematical if a frontal attack alone could meet with success. It certainly would not be by itself a skilful operation of war. Of course the enemy's object was to reduce the operation to a frontal attack, and therefore to bring about a deadlock, and, unfortunately, General Hamilton, looking upon these flanking moves rather as a diversion than as an integral part of the main scheme, and, in fact, the most important feature of it, contributed unwittingly to this hostile design.

It was, of course, General Hamilton's objective to capture Achi Baba, and as preliminary to that to take Krithia. Already the fact has been pointed out that when Koe's force landed at Gurkha bluffs by a successful ruse, there was disclosed the possibility of seizing Krithia had reinforcements reached Koe in time. The village was distant from the bluffs not more than a mile, and the interlying country was then open. When, after the disasters attending the landing of the covering force at V Beach, the question was raised as to what ought to be done with the main body who were to have followed them, and whose immediate landing at V Beach was seen to be, in the circumstances, impracticable, two courses were suggested; one that these troops should be sent to support Koe; the other that they should be transferred to W Beach—the adjacent "Lancashire Landing." Unhappily, the second course was adopted, on the ground that the first "would have involved considerable delay owing to the distance." Since the distance is not more than seven miles at most, the delay could not have been serious. Not only did this error of judgment lead to the evacuation of a most important position; it had, as will be seen in the sequel, the gravest effect on the later operations and on the campaign.

And there was another misjudgment, not, it is true, so serious in its results, but still unfortunate. This

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was the landing of a part of the French Expeditionary Corps under the command of General d'Amade, who acted under the orders of General Hamilton, at Kum Kale on the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles. The explained purpose of the move was to draw the fire of the Turkish batteries off the V and W landing places. Unquestionably it served that purpose, but it is an open question if the fire thus diverted made much difference. The landing of these French troops and their re-embarkation cost a fair total of casualties. If the French Corps had been thrown ashore near the Australians the effect would have been alike great and instantaneous, and the enemy would have been really embarrassed. The extreme southern toe of the peninsula was not a sensitive point in any sense of the word. It offered facilities for landing, and positions which, once seized, were strongly tenable, but it was not the point from which attack could be successfully developed. The facilities were too limited. Between this point and Achi Baba extended a broad depression running south to the Dardanelles, and the enemy had perfect and unobstructed observation over every movement of the invading army. General Hamilton, however, seems to have had misgivings about the division of his forces, not realising that the fleet at his back gave him freedom for bold dispositions.

The proof of these conclusions is not merely the course afterwards taken by the operations, and their issue, but the circumstance that immediately the landing of the Australians occurred, and the effort to drive them back had failed, the first thing the enemy did was to fortify himself against them in feverish haste, and to keep his hold upon Kaba Tepe cove and upon Y Beach, surrounded both positions with a broad zone of wire entanglements.

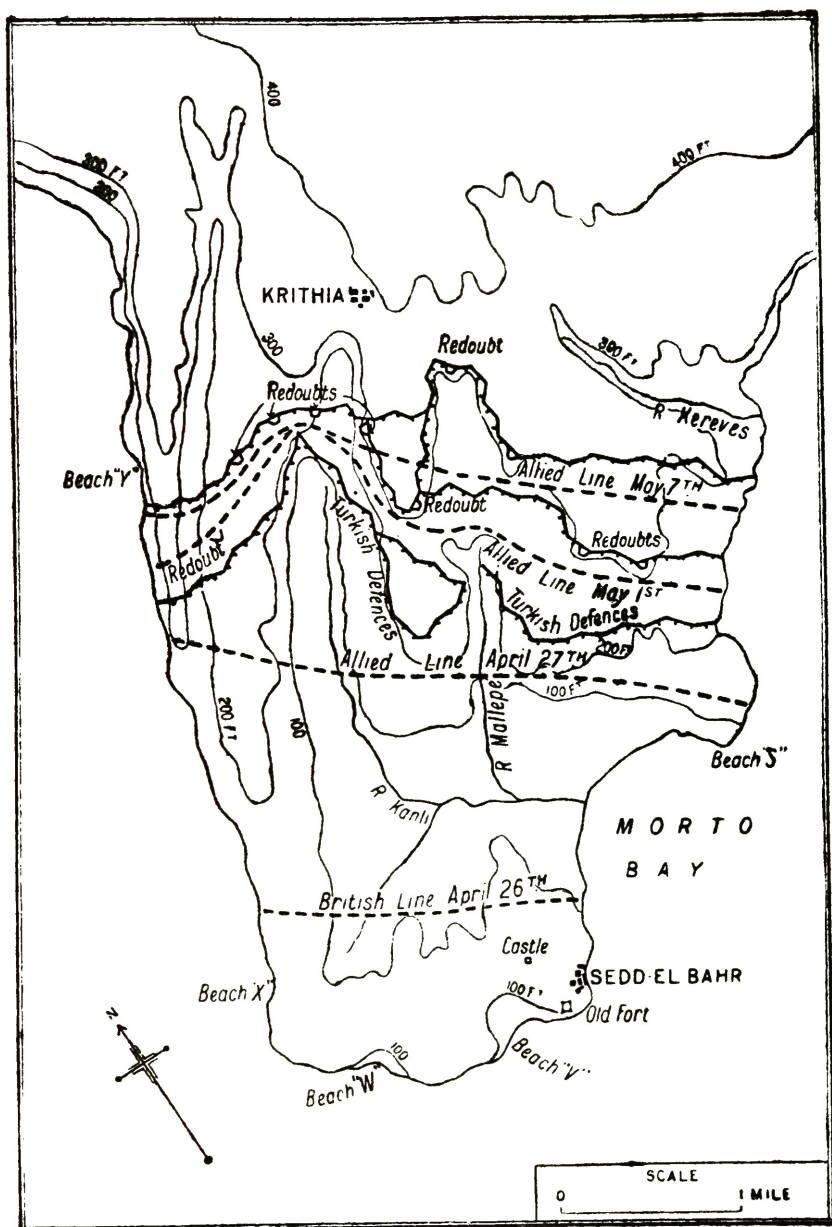
Of the points along the coast, Kaba Tepe headland with the adjacent cove was important, for it was within striking distance of the junction of roads from Maidos, Kalid Bahr, and Krithia. That junction formed a vital spot of the defence.

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As it stood immediately after the landing operations at the southern point of the peninsula, the position was that Tekke Burnu was in British hands, together with landing place "X" on the one side of it and landing place "W" on the other. Part also of Helles Burnu was in possession of General Hamilton's troops, but owing to the obstruction offered by successive lines of wire entanglements, added to the difficulties of the landing at V Beach, the enemy still held the eastern slopes of Helles Burnu together with the amphitheatre just beyond.

On the morning of April 26 one of the first necessities was to improve the position of those of the Dublins, Munsters and Hampshires who had managed to get ashore. In the course of the night, in response to a message from General Hunter-Weston, Rear-Admiral Wemyss had steamed in with the ships of his squadron, and at daybreak the enemy's positions in the amphitheatre, with points of support in the ruined fort of Sedd-el-Bahr, the ruins of Sedd-el-Bahr village, and an old castle just to the north of it, were heavily shelled. These places lay on the eastern slopes of Helles Burnu. The objective was to capture the remainder of that height.

With that in view the small force of British infantry—500 out of the original 2,000 had been killed or wounded on the previous day chiefly in the attempts to land from *River Clyde*—were led to the assault by Lieut.-Colonel Doughty-Williams and Captain Walford, R.A., Brigade-Major. They had now the support of the naval guns, and though that support alone made such an attempt practicable, were subjected on the way from the beach to the village to a galling fire. Captain Walford was among the first of those who fell. Yet despite their trying experience during the landing, and the hardly less trying night they had just passed crouched under the escarpment along the shore, these brave men did not waver. Few have been the instances in war of more unshakable intrepidity. With such troops, skilfully handled, it seemed possible to accomplish anything.



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And this valour was unquestionably not without its moral effect on the Turks, for though they offered a determined opposition, backed by machine-guns in every lurking place, they showed here little relish for fighting at close quarters. By 10 in the forenoon (April 26) the ruins of the village had been cleared. Then after the briefest pause the troops started to scale the open slope above and by 2 in the afternoon had reached and taken the old castle on the apex of the hill. Both heights, Helles Burnu as well as Tekke Burnu, being now in British hands, it became feasible to use V Beach for the landing of the French Corps.

On April 27 a general move forward was ordered. The intention was to reach a line extending across the toe of the peninsula from a point two miles to the north of Tekke Burnu to Eski Hissarlik Point, where all this while Casson had been maintaining himself. The proposed line was three miles in length. To this initial advance the enemy, engaged in withdrawing and reorganising his forces, offered no opposition. The ground gained had the effect of relieving congestion, and since it included several wells, it also, in part, eased the problem of water supply.

Considering it important, as it was, to push forward before the Turks received reinforcements, General Hamilton determined upon a second move for the morning of the 28th, though owing to the losses incurred during the several landing operations his line was not strongly held. The aim this time was to advance upon Krithia, the left brigade of the 29th Division leading. On their right were the 87th Brigade, strengthened by the *Drake* Battalion, R.N.D., then the 88th Brigade, then on the extreme right the French Corps. The 86th Brigade, now under the command of Casson, was in reserve.

To Krithia the distance was about three miles. Viewed from the British line, the ground to be covered was the *cul-de-sac* valley of the Kanli Dere, having on the left along the coast the ridge of the bluffs, and on

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the right the long gradually falling southern spur of Achi Baba. At the head of the valley, and where it was narrowest, lay the village on the south-western foot of the mountain. Beyond the long spur to the right was another small *cul-de-sac* valley, that of the Kereves Dere. It was intended to seize this southern spur, so that the French Expeditionary Corps might establish itself on the line of the stream last named.

The position to be attacked offered, however, very favourable dispositions for defence. Nor had the enemy neglected to make the most of them. On the inward slopes of the coast ridge he had now thrown up defence works, and he had entrenched the Achi Baba spur, so that the Kanli valley presented the aspect of a funnel fortified along both faces. Further, a disadvantage of the attack was the lack of field artillery, not yet landed, and the difficulty, as yet, of moving ammunition supplies from the beaches.

As planned, the attack of April 28 opened at 8 in the morning. The most rapid advance was made by the 87th Brigade, which in two hours advanced two miles. That, however, was due in part to the Brigade having to move up the valley. The main opposition was on the higher ground on either side. The 88th Brigade attacking the spur had stiff fighting from the first. They pushed on, nevertheless, for three and a half hours and until their ammunition began to give out. On their right the French had coincidentally stormed the part of the spur in front of them, and the rise bordering on the Kanli Dere valley was cleared to within a mile of Krithia. Seeing, however, that the 88th Brigade had at length been brought to a halt, the 86th were ordered forward to take up the advance, and pushed on three-quarters of a mile further. Meanwhile, along the higher ground on the coast side of the valley the Inniskilling Fusiliers had likewise fought their way until close to Krithia. But the troops in the valley on their right having been held up by strong defence works, the Irishmen were ordered to withdraw into line.

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This was the situation as it stood by 2 o'clock in the afternoon. An hour later the Turks launched a counter-attack. The effort was to drive the Allied troops off the part of the spur they had captured. It was a heavy counter-attack and a resolute one. The enemy came to close quarters with the bayonet, and some of the ground gained was lost, more especially on the right. This uncovered the flank of the 88th Brigade. Already tired by hours of stiff fighting, and short of ammunition into the bargain, they met, before the position could be restored, with heavy casualties. In the main, however, the ground gained was held.

Krithia had not been taken as had been hoped, and the action had not, as regards its chief objectives, proved successful. It was the expressed opinion of General Hamilton that "had it been possible to push in reinforcements of men, artillery and munitions during the day, Krithia should have fallen, and much subsequent fighting for its capture would have been avoided."

Much more evident is it now, however, that had the position taken by Koe's force at Gurkha bluffs not been evacuated, as by this time it had been, but reinforced instead, Krithia must assuredly have fallen, and at a mere trifle of the cost of this indecisive action, for the position seized by Koe lay right at the head of the Kanli valley, and since the enemy could not then have defended the coast ridge lying between this flanking force and the British main body, he would have been compelled to rely solely upon a defence of the Achi Baba spurs, where, however, he would also have found himself outflanked. It was exactly such a move that he most feared. Further, in this action itself it was unfortunate to have withdrawn the Inniskillings, seeing that they had by great dash reached once more the position which had been given up. Unhappily these mistakes proved costly.

During the next two days no movement was made by either side, beyond a readjustment of the French section of the line. The interval was made use of to land most of the British field guns and reinforcements, consisting

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of two battalions of the Royal Naval Division and the 29th Division of the Indian Army.

Just before moonrise on April 30, however, the Turks launched a heavy night attack. Preceded by a hot and sudden burst of fire, their infantry came on in massed formation, three lines with no interval between man and man in any. The first line did not fire. It was found afterwards that they had been deprived of ammunition, and as the second and third lines were close behind they had no choice save to advance, relying upon the bayonet alone. This, at that stage of the war, was a characteristic German tactic. The point of the British front upon which the weight of the assault fell was that held on the spur by the 86th Brigade. Under the pressure, which was overwhelming, this part of the British line gave way. But the flank of the attacking column as it advanced became exposed, and before its dispositions could be readjusted two corps of the 88th Brigade, the 5th Royal Scots and the Essex Regiment, were thrown upon it and closed with the bayonet. In the darkness the enemy column fell into confusion, and the attack was hurled back. On the left the French Senegalese troops had been attacked by a second and similar column. There was here a swaying and savage fight. The assault was succeeded by counter-assault, and this more than once repeated.

Evidently, though in fact it accomplished nothing, his nocturnal enterprise had been expected by the enemy to yield great results. The officers of the attacking troops had been provided with red, white and green Bengal lights for the guidance of their gunners—red signalling “lengthen range”; white, “front trenches stormed”; green, “main position carried.” And there were found on the field copies in Turkish of an army order in these terms:—

Attack the enemy with the bayonet; and utterly destroy him.  
We shall not retire one step. If we do our religion, country and nation will perish.

Soldiers, the world is looking upon you. Your only hope of salvation is to bring this battle to a victorious issue, or gloriously to give up your life.

VON ZOWERNSTERN.

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The Turks had fought stubbornly, and their losses had been severe. At daylight, therefore, the whole Allied force was thrown forward in a counter-assault. On the left there was a marked advance, and in fact, since the French right was held, the line tended to pivot on its right. This not being in accordance with intended dispositions, the former line was fallen back upon.

In these actions, in the battle round Anzac Cove, and in the several landings the total Allied losses had been some 15,000 men. Those of the Turks, since they were also under naval gunfire, were even heavier. The confined space in which the battle for Krithia had been fought had left the ground thickly strewn, and in places even heaped, with the dead and wounded, and notwithstanding that no formal suspension of hostilities had been arranged for the purpose, enemy burial parties came out next day bearing red crescent flags. Their work of digging great common graves into which the bodies of their slain were cast was not interfered with. On the side of the Allies the proportion of killed, less than 2,000 men, had not been high, and they had already been interred with due honours. The chief difficulty had been the evacuation of the wounded, not an easy matter for either of the combatants.

A very considerable percentage of the British troops were young recruits without previous experience in action, while the Turks pitted against them were for the most part veteran regulars. But in coolness and steadiness these recruits, volunteers who had flocked to arms at the first call, had proved tactically more than a match for the foe. There had been critical moments in the action, moments in which it had seemed touch and go whether or not the struggle might end in disaster, for the enemy, powerfully reinforced, had been "out" to win at all costs, and the appeal to fanaticism had not been without effect. Always, however, at these moments, as had been proved before on many a field, the British soldier revealed his nerve in battle. The harder he was pressed the more unconquerable he showed himself. And General Hunter-Weston, who had the

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conduct of the action on the spot, proved a ready and resourceful tactician. It was from no want of skill in tactics that the battle had failed to give the results expected. That failure arose from oversights in the strategical dispositions. Tactically, the marvel is that, handicapped as the Allied force was by the lack of a complete equipment and inferior in numbers, they were able to inflict upon the enemy a most costly repulse. By "all the rules" they ought to have been driven into the sea.

Though by May 1 the British line had been advanced some 5,000 yards from the main landing places, a most remarkable feat in the circumstances, the position occupied was still cramped and crowded, and since the enemy held the higher ground, and the whole of the British position, landing places included, was within the range even of his field artillery, it was clearly imperative to enlarge the area.

Hence, though his troops were tired, General Hamilton resolved on May 5 on a further attack. He now considered, however, that the force at the southern point of the peninsula was not strong enough and he did not think it prudent to risk another general engagement without a reserve. To form that reserve he constituted a new composite division, consisting of the 2nd Australian and New Zealand Brigades, withdrawn from Anzac Cove for the purpose, and of a Naval Brigade, formed of the *Drake* and *Plymouth* battalions. Another Naval Brigade, the 2nd, was assigned to reinforce the French Corps. While it had become apparently necessary, the withdrawal of part of the Anzac force to the southern toe of the peninsula cannot be considered a good move. The transfer left it out of the question for the remainder of the Anzacs to conduct the vigorous offensive which more than anything else must have aided the southern operations. Sledge-hammer blows are not necessarily skill in the art of war.

And that very speedily became evident. The object of the renewed attack on May 5 was the capture of the southern ridges of Achi Baba. Part of the southern

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spur had been taken, but to the rest the enemy continued tenaciously to cling, and he had been hard at work entrenching and throwing up redoubts. The shape of this spur, dividing the valley of the Kanli Dere from that of the Kereves Dere, is somewhat peculiar. Towards its end it divides, and while one part of the rise runs south-west, the other, branching off, runs south towards the Dardanelles. Between the two lies a small depression down which flows the Mallepe Dere. The result, taking a bird's-eye view, from the south is that the bifurcated ridge presents the appearance of a very high-heeled boot. The British had seized the "heel," but the enemy still held on to the rest of the boot. The rest of the boot was now to be captured—if possible.

The attack was to be carried out by the 29th Division, stiffened by the inclusion in it of the Indian Brigade, and by the French Corps, plus the 2nd Naval Brigade. The French and the Naval men on the right were to assault the ridge between the Mallepe Dere depression and the Kereves Dere, while the 29th Division were to advance from the "heel" as a jumping-off place, and push in between the Turks and Krithia. In themselves these dispositions were sound enough, had it not been that the enemy, relieved of anxiety with regard to the Australian force which he had shown he gravely feared and had reason to fear, was able to concentrate against the British main body. And that beyond question suited him to a nicety, for on these southern ridges of Achi Baba he could fight to the greatest advantage. From his point of view it was his chosen ground.

While, consequently, the tactical plan of the action was excellent, yet, as has been proved over and over again, faults of strategy, like a bad foundation, ruined the structure. It is, of course, but just to observe that General Hamilton considered himself faced, owing to his limited forces, with a very serious embarrassment. But it is equally evident that he would in all probability have gained more by a vigorous concurrent attack on the part of the whole of the Australian and New Zealand force, launched just before these southern activities.

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The assault of May 5 was led by the 29th Division. Half an hour later that by the French Corps started. The Turks contested the ground foot by foot. Positions were taken, then lost, then retaken. Others were taken and held against every effort of the enemy to recover them. It was a desperate encounter, the fighting for the most part at close quarters. Slowly, however, the Allied forces by sheer valour pushed on. In five hours of this fighting they had gone forward some 300 yards, and the enemy's advanced defences were in their hands. His main position, however, had not been reached. On the right the French had gained the summit of the ridge, but were there compelled to dig in. On the left the 88th Brigade had been held up by a plantation of fir trees converted into a nest of machine-guns. More than once they had got into this wood, but under the sweep of bullets could not remain in it.

The day was now waning, and it was plain that nothing more could be done save entrench. Night closed in on the scene of this bloody struggle, where the dead and wounded of both sides lay mingled together, and the moans of the injured formed an undertone to the sniping that, despite darkness, went on along the line on both sides. At midnight the enemy, worried by the French advance, crept up the slope from the Kereves Dere, and hurled himself on General d'Amade's troops with the bayonet. The summit of the rise had to be evacuated. At dawn, however, the French launched a counter-attack, again cleared out the Turks, and held their advantage.

Next day the battle began afresh. The British guns, having got on to the lurking places of the hostile machine-guns, knocked them about vigorously. Thanks to this searching by the artillery, the Lancashire Fusiliers, who led off, were able to make headway. The 88th Brigade then dashed forward, and this time the 5th Royal Scots cleared the firwood, dealing faithfully with the enemy snipers who had been perched aloft in the trees, some of them upon small wooden platforms. On the left of the wood, and to prevent it from being retaken

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by an assault in flank, the Inniskillings successively rushed three lines of Turkish trenches. To the left of the Irishmen the Scottish Borderers also took a bite.

Affairs indeed seemed to be going well—for the enemy's taste, too well. Early in the afternoon, therefore, he came on in a counter-attack, an assault in mass, with weight of numbers behind it. Once more the fir plantation changed hands. Then an enfilading fire was opened on this part of the British line from the rise on the opposite side of the Kanli Dere valley along the coast. It was decided, therefore, before daylight failed, to make a final dash, and the New Zealanders were ordered to support it. The Allied troops were tired, but they responded with spirit to this call upon them and the whole line, from extreme left to extreme right, charged forward simultaneously, and by the sheer energy, fury and momentum of the impact the Turks, resisting desperately, were borne back. Yet another 300 yards or so had been gained, and the whole of the enemy's first line passed over.

It was now the end of the second day and another night was put in on the battlefield behind hastily contrived cover. The Turks had been heavily punished. At the same time, it was palpable that they were receiving a steady stream of reinforcements. Next morning the enemy's lines and communications were vigorously bombarded by the fleet. The New Zealanders, who this time were to lead off with the 88th Brigade in support, recaptured the firwood and advanced slightly beyond it, in all some 200 yards. But no further advance proved then practicable. This arrest on the left of the line led to a corresponding arrest of the French advance on the right, for the movement had become one converging upon Krithia.

There was now, in consequence, a pause in the attack for about three hours. During that time messages were being sent to the fleet for a renewed bombardment, and arrangements made that the pounding might at once be followed by a general assault. It was half-past five in the afternoon when, after tremendous salvoes

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from the ships, the move took place. Night fell while it was still in progress. Charging forward in open order along the slopes of the Kereves Dere ridge the Zouaves of the 1st French Division carried two lines of Turkish redoubts. The 2nd French Division stormed another defence work and held it against repeated efforts at recapture.

On their left the New Zealanders, in company with the 2nd Australian Brigade, who had also been thrown into the fight, pushed forwards towards Krithia yet another 400 yards. Counter-attacked by fresh Turkish troops again and again, they beat back the enemy every time. Not all his sacrifices could shake their hold. Rarely has grimmer determination been witnessed on the battlefield. The Turkish losses here were frightful, and it is certain that that alone at length put an end to the enemy's assaults, for the German officers from behind, who drove on the Turkish rank and file, seemed animated by bitter animosity. From their commanders—Brigadier-General F. E. Johnston (New Zealanders) and Brigadier-General the Hon. J. W. Clay (Australians)—downwards, not a man among the Anzacs flinched from the ordeal. Most of this fighting went on in darkness.

In the meantime, led by Major-General W. R. Marshall, the 87th Brigade had made a resolute effort to advance along the ridge bordering on the coast. The ridge was bare of cover and the enemy took care to sweep it at long range with machine-guns. Gallant though the effort was, the Brigade could only advance 200 yards. In all, during the three days' battle the front had been carried forward something like 1,000 yards.

Just previously, on May 4, the Australians at Kaba Tepe had attempted to seize that headland and the cove. With their diminished force, however, the effort could not be persisted in. An attempt on May 2 to storm a knoll overlooking the centre of the line had also not been fortunate. In tactics of the "bushranging" type the Australians were remarkably successful every time; and most probably they would have carried through both the enterprises alluded to had they been

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left to do it in their own manner. In fact, their peculiar tactics, though turned down as "ragged," were the more skilful and adapted to this rugged country.

Reviewing the Gallipoli operations so far as they had gone up to May 6, there were misjudgments which have since become palpable. It was a misjudgment to employ a military force not to support naval action, but in effect to remedy a naval failure due partly to untested theory, partly to a piecemeal method. That employment of the troops amounted, in fact, to a radical change of plan, and it was a bad change. But the change in turn was aggravated by unsuitable strategical dispositions. The main attack, supported by a naval bombardment of the nodal points of the defence, should have been delivered from the Anzac flank from the first. Finally, there were misjudgments as to tactics. Even in the attacks from the southern toe the Achi Baba defences were most vulnerable to a turning movement from positions along the coastal ridge, and least vulnerable to a frontal assault. The Expeditionary Force, in short, was wrongly employed ; it was inadequate for the purpose ; and besides being inadequate its strength was frittered away.

## CHAPTER VII

### MESOPOTAMIA : THE ADVANCE TO KUT

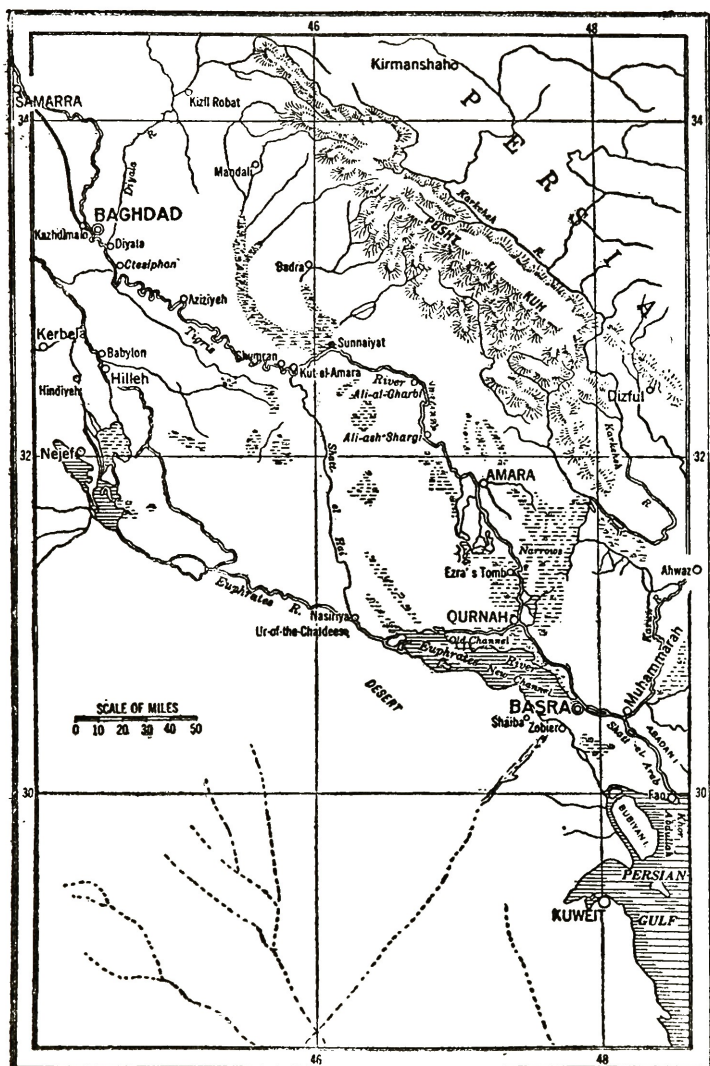
Indecision as to policy in Mesopotamia—Advance inland decided upon—Appointment of Sir John Nixon—His demand for cavalry refused—Nixon's plans—The transport problem—Its neglect by the British Government—The expedition to Amara—"Townshend's Regatta"—Capture of Amara—Expedition to and capture of Nazariyeh—Deficiencies of medical equipment and hardships of the troops—Townshend ordered from Home to move upon Kut—Defeat of the Turks at Kut—Inception of the Bagdad project—Cautions of military authorities disregarded—Pressure upon Nixon—Information of enemy movements withheld—Townshend's inadequate force—His protest—The project rash—Advance to and Battle of Ctesiphon—Necessity for retreat.

SINCE it is clearest in narration to follow events in the order of time, we may now, leaving the story of Gallipoli, take up the relation of the Mesopotamia Campaign from the point reached in the third chapter. And it is advisable also so to proceed because the campaigns in Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia were not unrelated. The difficulties of the latter to no small extent arose from the difficulties and miscalculations of the former. But for the operations in Gallipoli, already described as off the main track of the War, a vigorous and successful offensive might from the first have been pursued in Mesopotamia, and, seconded in due course by a campaign in Syria, could hardly have failed, looking at the concurrent Russian operations in the Caucasus, gravely to have shaken German power in Turkey. An attack upon Gallipoli, assuming it to be soundly planned, might then have been undertaken with every prospect of success. It belonged to the later, not to the initial stages of the struggle.

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As related, General Sir A. Barrett had occupied the country on both sides of the Shatt-el-Arab, and had pushed his advance as far as Kurna. His force—one division of the Indian Army—had not only a wide extent of territory to safeguard, but also the work of converting Basra into a suitable base. The Turks were on both sides of him—on the east at Ahwaz, threatening the oil-fields, and on the west at Nazariyeh on the Euphrates. It was by no means an easy situation, and the less easy because, notwithstanding his repulse, the enemy was known to be preparing to renew the attack. All the probabilities, if they were not promptly met, were that this renewed offensive would take the form of a converging movement, and it was plain that the way to meet it was by anticipatory blows which would defeat the several enemy forces in detail.

It was fortunate that the Turkish communications with the Lower Tigris were alike enormously long, and beyond Bagdad undeveloped, for the question of the British policy to be followed in Mesopotamia had not yet at this time been determined. Nor was it until April, 1915, that the matter was settled even tentatively. At the beginning of the year the British Government at home considered that Basra should mark the limit of the advance. And there were other impediments. In India, during the five years which elapsed between Lord Kitchener's relinquishment of his command-in-chief of the Indian Army and the outbreak of the War, there had been initiated and followed a rigid military economy. The idea that India might be called upon for aid in an imperial struggle had been definitely set aside. A re-organisation of the army was entered upon, having as its aim the limitation of military operations to possible wars on the North-west Frontier. In pursuance of that re-organisation, or more properly, reduction, the number of divisions immediately mobilisable for service in the field had been cut down from nine to seven. And the artillery arm had been cut down throughout the Service, which was left wholly unprovided with heavy guns. These economies, indeed,



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were felt in every branch, and not least in the Medical. In hospital equipment and in field ambulances the Indian Army had never been brought up to a European standard. But even the standard that had existed was lowered, and not merely in material but in the numbers of the *personnel*.

Nevertheless, though that was the state of affairs, the Government of India suddenly found itself on the outbreak of War in 1914 faced with demands from the Cabinet at home for an Expeditionary Force for France ; an Expeditionary Force for Egypt ; an Expeditionary Force for East Africa, and the Expedition to Basra. Blame for what afterwards occurred in Mesopotamia was laid partly upon high officials of the Indian Government, partly upon men upon the spot. The facts just cited leave it beyond doubt that the root cause was the policy which had been followed, and that whatever its motive, relief of taxation or otherwise, it had been based upon a total misreading of political portents.

So far as the Expedition to Basra was concerned, the fact was patent that affairs could not be left as they were in these first months of 1915. An additional brigade had been sent from Bombay to reinforce Sir A. Barrett, but that brigade was no more than a stop-gap. Finally, it was decided, at the beginning of April, and after much official correspondence, to increase the Expedition to an Army Corps, and Sir John Nixon was sent to take over the command. He arrived with his Staff at Basra on April 9. These measures for the increase of the force, which now was to be made up of the 6th and 12th Divisions of the Indian Army, plus a brigade of cavalry, were taken only just in time. The Turks, encouraged by the inactivity which had succeeded the first British irruption, had pushed forward again as far as Barjisiyeh, close to Basra. At that place, however, on April 14, they were met and defeated by a force under the command of General Melliss.

The enemy having thus on one flank been thrown back upon Nazariyeh, Sir John Nixon's next step was to clear him out of Ahwaz, and General Gorrington was

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sent forward up the Karun River to Ahwaz with two brigades of infantry and the cavalry. He drove the Turks out and followed them up towards Bisaitin. This once more secured the oil pipe-line.

General Nixon had landed at Basra with instructions in the first place to occupy the whole of the Basra vilayet, and next, after ascertaining conditions on the spot, to report on a subsequent advance to Bagdad. His first demand was for an additional brigade of cavalry, including a British unit, and for a battalion of Pioneers. The demand for more cavalry was refused.

With the arrival on April 22 of General Townshend, who was to take command of the 6th Division, Gorringe having the 12th, the plan came up for an advance upon Amara. On military grounds, Sir John Nixon desired to make that move as soon as possible. If it were made and without delay, then it appeared likely that the Turkish force Gorringe had been shepherding towards Bisaitin would fail to reach the capital of the vilayet before the British under Townshend arrived, and would find their retreat upon Bagdad cut off. It would be an important success both as securing the British right flank as weakening the enemy, and as ensuring the capture of Amara with very little loss.

Politically the capture of Amara was of consequence, because the place was the seat of the Turkish provincial administration. The town, quite modern—it was only founded about the year 1866—lies some 200 miles up the Tigris. In comparison with other towns in Mesopotamia it was well built, with a frontage towards the river of—relatively—handsome buildings, constructed as usual of baked mud, but decorated with oriel windows of quaint Eastern design. Amara too boasted a spacious bazaar, and was one of the chief *entrepôts* of traffic on the river. The population numbered about 12,000. Next to Bagdad it was the largest town in Mesopotamia, and its capture would be a serious loss to the Turks, not merely as injuring their prestige, but from the fact that, pursuant to the policy of developing this part of the Empire as a route to the Persian Gulf, efforts to

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promote the prosperity of Amara had been a consistent aim for several decades.

The occupation of Amara besides was within Sir John Nixon's instructions. Nevertheless, the project led to another round of official correspondence. The British Government at home first of all laid it down that "in Mesopotamia a safe game must be played," and then intimated that Sir John Nixon must "clearly understand" that he could be provided with no more troops.

On the spot meanwhile the preparations had been pushed forward. The chief difficulty was lack of transport. From the outset in that respect the Expedition had been badly provided for. Matters were now, however, much worse, for though the original force had been doubled, the river flotilla, barely sufficient for the half of it, had not been increased.

The real cause of this deficiency lay in the obscurity of declared political aims. To begin with, it had not been the intention to push up the Tigris at all, and the British Cabinet was opposed to such a project. Naturally, therefore, there had, to begin with, been no preparations to do so. The policy having been in that regard changed, it was irrational to expect that the equipment of the Expedition for this new task could be improvised with equal readiness. Of course, the farther up the Tigris the British force moved the more important transport became. The idea of reaching Bagdad unless and until something like adequate means for transport had been provided was impracticable. This was the kernel of the situation. The entire advantage of the British over the enemy depended on communications and on their character. It was not the number of troops which in this campaign constituted the primary factor, it was, in view of the vast and empty spaces to be traversed by either side, the facility of moving troops. Upon transport the campaign manifestly hinged.

Sir John Nixon had been instructed to report upon the transport question, and through General Kemball, the Chief of his Staff, in due course formulated his demands.

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They were for six paddle steamers, three stern-wheel steamers, eight tugs, and forty-three barges, as well as *personnel* and material. He pointed out that the lack of light draft steamers and other craft caused serious delay, uncertainty, and anxiety, and that there was no provision, taking the craft at his disposal, for wear and tear. His Chief of Staff added, which was perfectly true, that a properly equipped river fleet would "double and treble the value of the army of occupation."

Unfortunately, apart from the delay due to official intercommunication, of which, on this demand, there was another outbreak, it was perfectly evident that such a demand could not be met save after a considerable interval of time—some months at least. In the meanwhile, unless the campaign was to be suspended, the army of occupation would have thrown upon it heavy additional hardship and fatigue in an exceptionally trying climate. That fact was the root of the so-called medical breakdown. The sequence of causes and consequences was—indefinite policy, no preparations, insufficient transport, hardship and overwork, sickness, inability to cope with it, reverses.

So far as transport was concerned, the men on the spot were not disposed to wait upon the workings of official machinery, which, though solid, is slow. As it stood, the military position imperatively demanded rapidity of action. Indeed, if action were not rapid, all the odds were that the favourable opportunity would pass never to return. If it managed to struggle across country and reach Amara first, the Turkish force Gorringer had been holding off would undoubtedly there make a stubborn stand, and form the nucleus of a powerful enemy counter-offensive. Inadequate transport, therefore, or not, a push up to Amara had to be essayed.

The result of this determination was "Townshend's Regatta." A flotilla of sorts was improvised. Everything that would float was pressed into service. Light craft were converted into "gunboats." All the native

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boats called "bellums" that Nixon could lay hands on were collected. It was a queer and miscellaneous assortment, but this time, at all events, audacity repaired the effects of oversight. After a day and night preparation the troops of the 6th Division were embarked, and from the lofty watch-tower put up by the engineers at Kurna and commanding a vast horizon of this flat land, the flotilla could be seen breasting the current and negotiating the windings of the Tigris; a sinuous procession of gunboats, real and "camouflaged," mahelas, "bellums," and barges, flanked on either side by shore scouting parties.

This was the last thing the Turks had looked for. Unquestionably they were well informed as to the British transport entanglement, and unquestionably they were reckoning upon it. Suddenly this thing had sprung up, apparently from nowhere, and rumour no doubt magnified the phenomenon. Townshend met with no opposition worth mentioning. When on May 28 his advance force got within sight of Amara it proved sufficient for a party of twenty-two daring men, some sailors, some soldiers, to penetrate boldly into the town and announce the arrival of the "Armada" for the Turkish garrison without more ado to lay down their arms. They were 700 strong, but the force chased out of Ahwaz, having Amara as its base, had not returned, and it was not certain what had happened to it. The conclusion naturally was that the worst had happened. Next day Townshend's troops marched in without resistance.

Two days later the missing Turkish division turned up, and were close upon the town before they discovered their mistake as to its new occupants. With one British force in front of them, and another somewhere behind, and hundreds of miles from anywhere, they did not stay to offer battle. The vanguard which had walked into the trap were surrounded and taken prisoners; the main body dispersed.

So far audacity had justified itself, and it is hardly warranted to suggest, as was done in the Report of the

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Mesopotamian Commission, that Sir John Nixon and his Staff acted after this stroke from over-confidence. Sir John Nixon had been placed, and from no fault of his own, in an almost impossible position—confronted with the alternative either of acting promptly and boldly, or of piling up obstacles. If he had chosen the latter alternative he would most assuredly have been condemned for failure. Those responsible for putting him in such a position were little likely to shoulder the censure. After this success Sir John Nixon's confidence was perfectly explicable and it is confidence of that kind that leads to victory in war.

For what was the commander's next step ? It was not to push Townshend farther forward, which would have been rash ; it was to turn attention to the Turks at Nazariyeh, which was advisable and prudent. Goringe was dispatched with his force up the Euphrates and through the Hammar Lake, and this stroke being also swift and unexpected, he captured on July 25 the Turkish garrison, with 17 guns and a great quantity of war material. For the enemy the loss was crippling, and there can be no sort of question but that the three blows so far dealt—the capture of Ahwaz and the dispersal of the Turkish column holding that place ; the capture of Amara, wiping out the Turkish administration in the vilayet, and the capture of Nazariyeh with its garrison and stores, alone made the British occupation secure when later, owing to the transport problem, the tide of fortune turned.

To render the seizure of Nazariyeh feasible the improvised flotilla had to a great extent to be drawn upon. But because it was only a makeshift, and insufficient, the fatigues imposed upon the troops were severe, and notwithstanding their spirit—and these soldiers of the Indian Army were as magnificent in patience as in valour—they went down rapidly with sickness. It has to be remembered that in the summer heats in Mesopotamia the thermometer stands between 120 and 130 degrees Fahrenheit, not merely for days together, but for weeks. And the swamps breed myriads of insect pests which

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render the days, and much more the nights, well-nigh unendurable.

Here again the lack of preparation, due partly to political indecision, partly to an imaginary economy, appeared. The medical equipment of the Indian Army has been already referred to. But in the present instance even that equipment had been cut down. The two divisions had only the medical and hospital outfit for one. And the truth about that matter simply is that the huge demands made upon the previously attenuated Indian Army Medical Service had left the Mesopotamia Expedition to put up with what was left. The men on the spot, overtaken by an impossible task, had to make the best of it.

This being the position of affairs, what next happened ? The troops were tired. With marvellous gallantry they had campaigned through the worst season ; they had gained a series of swift and striking successes. Upon whom was the effect of those successes most marked ? Upon Sir John Nixon and his Staff ? Not at all. The effect was most marked on the Government of India, and on the British Government at home. In July the Government of India suggested to the Government at home that Kut should be occupied, and the Government at home agreed. The condition and fatigues of the troops were overlooked ; the problem of transport had not been attacked ; the provision of hospitals and medical necessities had not been improved. Yet in these circumstances, though it certainly was rash, and rash here is a very mild word, to order General Townshend to move on to Kut, those orders were given. With a transport barely enough to extend the communications as far as Amara, and risky even at that, it was now decided to push them yet another 180 miles farther. It may be doubted if, Gallipoli only excepted, there is in modern history an equal instance of administrative temerity.

General Nixon had conducted his operations with audacity and therefore, since true audacity is rational, with brilliant results ; there were those not on the spot

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who thought they could better that by butting in and conducting operations with a dash which was merely foolish.

However, the advance upon Kut was made ; a long, lonely march dependent upon a vamped-up means of communication. On September 14 Townshend had reached Sheik Saad ; on September 15 his troops took by assault the strongly fortified enemy position of Abu Rammaneh ; on the 29th they had reached Kut, fought and defeated the Turks, who had attempted a stand before that place, and taken 1,700 prisoners, 13 guns, and a large quantity of war material. To secure his position at Kut General Townshend very properly pushed forward his cavalry in pursuit of the Turks as far as Aziziya, 50 miles farther up the Tigris.

The effect of this success was, like the advance upon Amara, to set on foot a project for going still farther. On August 30 Sir John Nixon had forwarded to the Government of India his report as to an advance upon Bagdad. He pointed out that the Turks being in flight it would be easier to follow them up than to fight a Turkish army entrenched above Kut. Such an attack, he observed, would be more difficult and costly than anything yet met with, " and the result of a check more serious for us."

To take the ball at the bound in this manner was, as campaigning, the absolutely advisable procedure—provided that transport was adequate and necessary reinforcements were forthcoming. Kut had been reached through eking out the river transport, and the river transport had been eked out by marching the troops with land transport, and by lightening the vessels and employing them to tow loaded barges. By this time the enemy realised that transport was the crux of the position, and had set on his irregulars to maraud the communications, so that wrecks of mahelas sunk or stranded by the fire of his irregulars, and looted of their freight, became by no means infrequent along this reach of the river. At times even the communication was interrupted.

On receiving Nixon's report Sir Percy Lake, Chief

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of the Indian Army Staff at Simla, agreed that on military grounds the suggested pursuit of the Turks was desirable, and he forwarded the report with a memorandum to that effect to the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Beauchamp Duff. General Duff, however, considered the project out of the question unless troops could be got "from France, Egypt, or elsewhere." A week later (September 17) the Viceroy of India (Lord Hardinge) wrote to Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Secretary of State for India, emphasising the desirability of an advance from Kut to Bagdad "if sufficient troops can be made available."

The question of whether or not he could advance to Bagdad was put to General Townshend. His reply, in a telegram to General Kemball was :—

If it is the desire of the Government to occupy Bagdad, then, unless great risk is to be run, it is, in my opinion, absolutely necessary that the advance from Kut should be carried out methodically by two divisions, or one Army Corps, or by one division supported closely by another complete division, exclusive of the garrisons of the important places of Nazariyeh, Ahwaz and Amara.

In response Kemball sent on the same date another telegram to Townshend informing him that it was General Nixon's intention to open the way to Bagdad, "as he understands another division will be sent here from France." Townshend was asked for his plan for effecting such an advance. Replying to Kemball, Townshend telegraphed : "You did not mention the arrival of a division from France in this country. That makes all the difference in my appreciation." With reference to that division he wrote in his diary : "Nothing definite known about this, and no earthly chance of its being in this country in time."

The question had been put to Townshend owing to the receipt by Nixon on October 3 of a cablegram from the Secretary of State. Nixon's reply was : "Consider I am strong enough to *open road to Bagdad* and with this intention propose to concentrate at Aziziya." "Next day he wired demanding another division (of the Indian Army) from France.

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Meanwhile at home the question had been (October 4) referred to Sir E. Barrow, military secretary at the India Office. Barrow's opinion was that an attempt to reach Bagdad with the present force would involve unjustifiable risk.

Next day (October 5) came a cablegram from Sir John Nixon stating that the Turks had ceased their retreat and taken up a position at Ctesiphon. The reply to Nixon's demand for more troops was that no reinforcements could be spared.

On October 6 the opinion of the General Staff at the War Office was taken. Their opinion was decided. They considered that an attempt to *hold* Bagdad except with larger forces and increased river transport would be to court disaster. Of that opinion the Government of India was informed, and the Viceroy cabled in reply : " Orders to stop further advance were telegraphed yesterday to General Nixon."

Seemingly the question had been settled, and it was evidently so regarded on the spot, for the troops at Kut had read out to them the following Army Order :—

The General Officer Commanding 6th Division wishes to tender his grateful thanks to all ranks of the division for the gallant and noble spirit in which they have advanced some 180 miles from Amara, defeated the enemy in an extremely strong position, and moved on another 50 miles or so in pursuit.

That we did not catch the retreating Turks is due to the fact of the shallow water of the river, and to the fact that the Turks are endowed by nature with strong knees.

He wishes he could have announced to the troops the end of their labours in Mesopotamia, but these operations naturally depend on those operations now being carried out in the Dardanelles, whence we now hope for good news.

He desires to tell the troops that orders have been received from Government in England that we are, for the present, to hold the position we have gained and thus our present orders are not to advance to Bagdad. It is the intention, therefore, of the G.O.C. to make the force as comfortable as it is possible to do under the circumstances; tents, etc., will be brought up as soon as possible.

(Signed) R. G. PEEL,  
Colonel, General Staff.

But though the orders referred to had been received, the Cabinet had on October 5 appointed a committee

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of the Foreign Office, General Staff, Admiralty, and India Office, to consider an advance on Bagdad "in all its possibilities and policy," on the ground that political reasons made such an occupation desirable.

More interchanges of views took place with the Government of India, and Sir Beauchamp Duff was again asked for his opinion. It was that while the troops available could *capture* Bagdad, they would not be able to hold the place against a counter-attack in mass, and that the effect of having to retire would be disastrous. He doubted also whether with the then insufficient number of light draft steamers the troops at Bagdad could be adequately supplied. This opinion was not sent to the Home Government in full. The Viceroy's reply was limited to the statement that in the view of the Commander-in-Chief in India it would be unwise to *occupy* Bagdad with present forces.

In the Government at home, however, the proposal was being pressed, and consequently on October 8 the Secretary of State for India sent two telegrams, one to the Viceroy, the other to Sir John Nixon. The telegram to the Viceroy ran: "The Cabinet are so impressed with the great political and military advantages of occupation of Bagdad that every effort will be made by us to supply the force necessary. We do not wish to attempt it with insufficient forces. I shall be glad to know whether you are satisfied that one division will suffice." To Sir John Nixon he wired: "Very urgent. To both occupy and hold Bagdad what addition to your present force are you confident will be necessary?"

Nixon replied that he was confident no additions to his present force were necessary to take Bagdad, but that he would need an additional division and one cavalry regiment *permanently to occupy* the city. He asked the Government of India to send him more river craft as an urgent need.

Referred to once more for their view the General Staff at the War Office at home urged that if Bagdad

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was to be occupied Nixon must have another two divisions. Sir E. Barrow took the same view.

Meanwhile Kemball had been sent up from Basra to Kut to interview Townshend. The Chief of Staff arrived at Kut on October 19, and the interview took place on the very day that at home the Naval and Military General Staff reported against the project on the existing footing. Coincidentally too there was being pushed up to Townshend a feeble reinforcement consisting of five squadrons of cavalry, two battalions of infantry, and one battery of Royal Horse Artillery. About the problem of transport nothing appears to have been done. Coincidentally also pressure was being brought to bear on the Government of India. The Commander-in-Chief in India again had the matter referred to him, and this time assented to the project provided a full division of reinforcements could be guaranteed to reach Mesopotamia within two months. The Secretary of State on October 21 represented to the Viceroy that prospects in Gallipoli being very uncertain, and the German attempt to break through to Constantinople looking as though it would succeed, "we"—presumably the British Government—"have great need of a striking success in the East." He added a warning that some 60,000 Turks might be concentrated at Bagdad by January, though the Turks' then present estimated strength in that quarter was only about 9,000. To this representation the reply of the Viceroy was that in his judgment the right policy was to take the risk and occupy Bagdad without delay. The Secretary of State rejoined (October 31): "If Nixon is satisfied that the force he has is sufficient, he may march on Bagdad." The information as to probable heavy concentration of Turks by January was not sent to the Commander-in-Chief in Mesopotamia. This was explained before the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry as arising from routine consequently upon the telegram of the Secretary of State addressed to the Viceroy being marked "private."

The circumstance remains that General Nixon was left to act without knowledge of this essential piece of

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information. All the facts just outlined are given in the Report of the Mesopotamia Commission, but not in chronological order as here. Their sequence, clarifying their relationship, leaves the origin of the project beyond doubt, and equally beyond doubt the responsibility for the events which followed. There was pressure upon the Government of India ; pressure on the spot in Mesopotamia ; a "hustle" that forced on the scheme in the teeth of responsible professional advice ; a desire to snatch a political effect ; the impatience that could not realise the foundation of success in war. Very different was this rashness from the audacity that had marked Sir John Nixon's strokes earlier in the campaign. But the very success which had attended them because they were audacious and not rash prompted this interference by those who had not taken the trouble to understand the conditions.

What was the force with which General Townshend, nearly 400 miles already from Basra, was expected and directed to embark upon this enterprise ? It consisted of the 6th Division, but the 6th Division worn down by a hard campaign. Adding the cavalry brigade, under Brigadier-General Roberts, and the reinforcements sent forward, it did not muster much more than 15,000 men. The General's own estimate put the effectives at 11,000 at most. Some of the battalions were at half strength. Nor was Sir John Nixon in a situation to afford further aid. At the outside the entire force in Mesopotamia at this time did not exceed 25,000, and they were now in occupation of a vast extent of country. The march from Kut to Bagdad, nearly 100 miles, would have to be made by the troops on foot, for the transport, owing to this effort to stretch it still further, would not and could not suffice for more than the carriage of supplies. To make matters worse, information had come in that the enemy, commanded by Nur-ed-Din, was concentrated at Laj, and with 38 guns was strongly posted near Ctesiphon behind a double line of defences. The attempt to dislodge him was to be made, notwithstanding that, owing to limitation of transport, it had taken six

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weeks to bring the supplies and reinforcements up from Basra.

On receiving the orders transmitted to him, General Townshend thought it his duty to protest, a course no soldier ever takes save in what he regards as extreme circumstances. He wrote, not to Sir John Nixon, but to the Viceroy of India. The passage in this letter in which he described the state of his force ran :—

These troops of mine are tired and their tails are not up, but slightly down ; the Mohammedans are not pleased at approaching the sacred precincts of Suliman Pak at Ctesiphon—the troops are not confident and have had enough ; as it is now, the British soldier and the Sepoy, as the Roman soldier did under Belisarius, look over their shoulders and are fearful of the distance from the sea, and go down, in consequence, with every imaginable disease.

It was just because Townshend was a skilful and experienced commander that he entertained misgivings. They were only too well founded. Already it has been pointed out that in this campaign the relative strength of forces was secondary to the question of moving forces. Had a suitable and sufficient river transport been available Townshend, despite the numerical limitation of his troops might have forestalled the enemy by a swift blow, and assuming that reinforcements reached him in time, could without doubt have held on. Suitable transport, however, was not available. Though that point had been insisted upon, not only by Nixon himself, but by all the naval and military authorities in their reports, the attention of the Cabinet at home had been fixed upon reinforcements—the comparatively minor matter. What was the good of discussing reinforcements without discussing how they were to be sent forward from Basra and how they were to be supplied in addition to the troops already on the spot by a transport inadequate even for the latter purpose ? Nixon had given his assent to a strictly limited operation—that of “opening the road to” Bagdad. He had been saddled with a very much larger enterprise—the proposed capture and occupation of that place—and at the same time left without the means of carrying the enterprise out.

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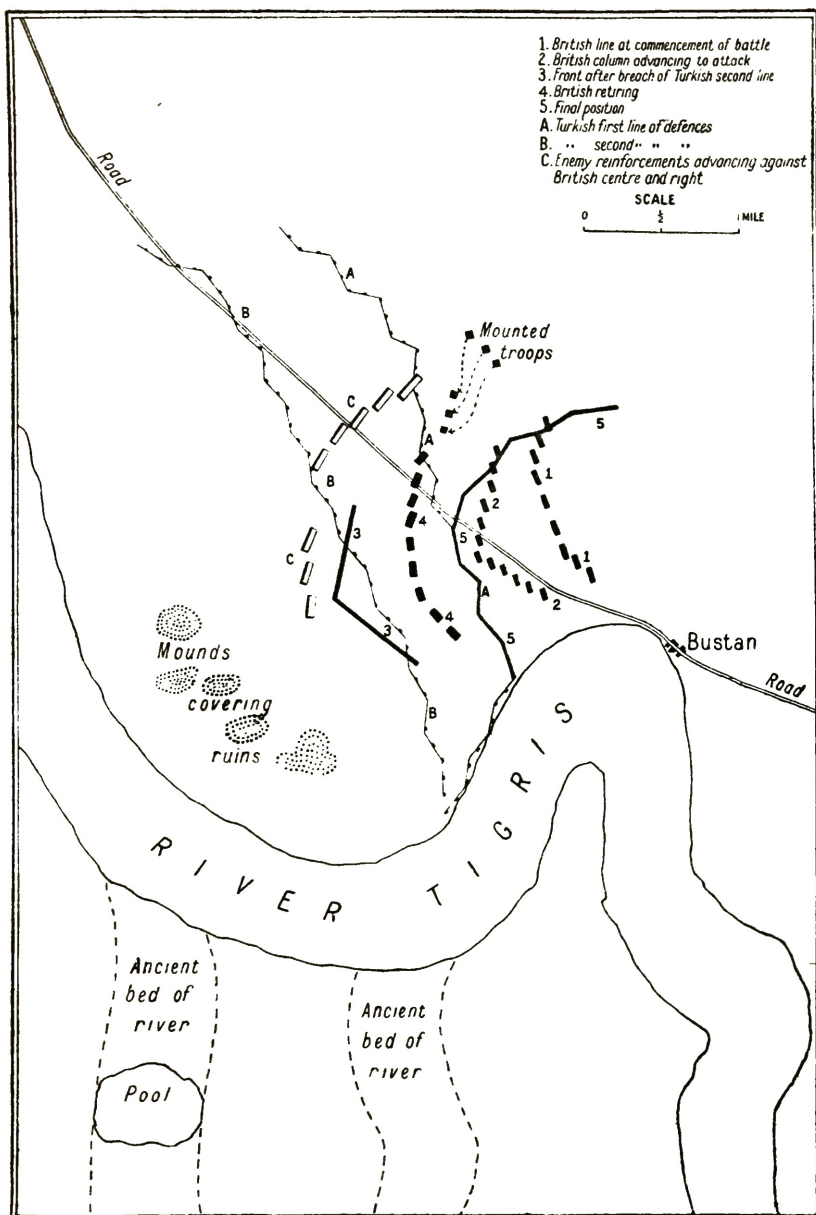
Townshend had his misgivings, since he knew that if he could not forestall the enemy the enemy would in all probability forestall him. It was certain in any even that the Turks would make every effort to do so. The Turkish communications with Mosul were enormously long, and in that fact lay the main chance in favour of this British offensive. But to take advantage of its swiftness of movement was imperative. Much time had already been lost in official beating about the bush, and the delay had been of value to the enemy. So far as the means of ensuring the success of the intended enterprise were concerned, the delay had resulted in nothing.

Finding himself so placed, there was only one thing which, short of resigning and breaking his career, Townshend could do. It was to make up for the lack of transport facilities as far as it could be done by forcing the pace of his march. This was asking much from the troops under his command, having regard to their condition, but what else was there for it?

At the outset there was little opposition. Only skirmishing parties of the enemy were met with. The distance to Aziziya was speedily covered. From that point, half-way to Bagdad, the real defence began. As informations, previously received, had declared, the Turks were found concentrated at Laj. Behind them, within easy distance up the river, they had the fortified position at Ctesiphon to fall back upon. The enemy at Laj was attacked (November 21) and dislodged.

Having occupied Laj, Townshend, after the briefest possible delay, pushed on to Ctesiphon. It was important to anticipate the arrival of enemy reinforcements known to be on the way.

Ctesiphon, not more than 16 miles—one day's long march—from Bagdad, is not a town or village, but the site of the ancient city marked by mounds covering its ruins. Nothing but the "Arch of Ctesiphon" remains to attest bygone importance. There is, hard by the site, a wretched hamlet called Bustan, but the existence



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of these few mud huts by the riverside served merely to emphasise the surrounding solitude. It is little cause for wonder that in this lonely land, as vast as it is unoccupied, the Indian soldiers, as they marched deeper into its recesses, "looked over their shoulders."

From the enemy's point of view the position at Ctesiphon was well chosen. Besides affording a certain vantage of observation, the mounds lent themselves to the construction of defence works, and gave some cover for the guns. It would not be easy to attack from the river because just below the position there is a sharp bend which would have to be negotiated, if at all, under a concentrated fire. And on the opposite side of the great waterway also there is a tongue of land, long and narrow and marked off from the adjacent country by the ancient bed of the river, which had here ages ago formed an acute loop. The modern course of the river cuts across the neck of this peninsula, but surrounded as it is by a kind of dry moat, more than a quarter of a mile in breadth, the tongue of land could readily be held against assault. Thus established on both banks, the enemy was secure against any attempt to turn him. The attack upon him had to be a frontal attack, or none.

Again, if defeated he could reckon at least upon reaching the Diala, not more than ten miles distant, while, if victorious, he had the attacking force some 75 miles distant from its base.

Beyond all this the Turkish force was ascertained to be some 13,000 strong. Notwithstanding that strength, the enemy, in view of the proved prowess and impetuous valour of the British-Indian troops, deemed it prudent to keep behind his two lines of entrenchments, stiffened by redoubts.

General Townshend arrived at Ctesiphon after a night march of nine miles from Laj. On November 22, at daybreak, he attacked. Having regard to the ascertained and evident force of the enemy he had no other course open to him. He had gone too far to turn back without a battle.

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His attack, directed against the enemy's position on the left (or East) bank of the river, had all the chances against it save one—the military virtue of his men. Despite the character of this service they had been unexpectedly called upon to perform, their discipline was firm. And the attack went well—well beyond anticipation. It cannot be said that the “artillery preparation” was adequate. There were not the guns. But, incomplete though it was, when the infantry went forward, the Turks, though they resisted stubbornly, were overpowered by the sheer impetuosity of the rush. The British-Indian troops, compelled to advance over a flat tract giving little or no cover, in the approach to the Turkish first line, lost heavily. That, however, did not shake them; it added fuel to their fury. After a sharp struggle in the enemy trenches with the bayonet, the Turks (the 45th Division) broke. The remnant bolted for their second line, a mile to the rear, the attackers close upon them. The wreck of the flying Turks and the van of the attacking column entered the second line to all intents together. The second line also was broken, and the attack swooped on to the batteries behind it. Eight of the Turkish guns speedily fell into the assailants' hands. It looked as though, after all, the battle would end in a victory.

Just at this juncture, however, a heavy column of Turkish reinforcements arrived—just at this juncture in the very nick of time. They were thrown into the fight forthwith. Townshend now found himself faced with something like a two to one superiority. The contingency he had feared had come to pass—the enemy had forestalled him. His own men, too, were spent with their exertions. Against the newcomers they could not hold the breach in the Turks' second line, wide though it was. The struggle was obstinate and bitter, the British striving to widen the breach; the enemy to press in upon the salient. Finally, weight of numbers told. The British troops were little by little pushed out. Sullenly they retired upon the Turkish

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first line. Contenting himself with having closed the breach in his second line, the enemy did not follow up. He was not in a condition to attempt it. The long day was now fading into night, and the battle died down into a duel between the opposing guns.

That night and next day were occupied by the British in "turning round" the captured Turkish first line trenches. But the question arose of what was to be done. It was plain that with the force at his disposal Townshend could not go on. It was hardly less dangerous to fall back. The General saw, however, that, risky as it was, the latter was in truth the one course open. To the enemy he put on a bold front as indicating that he meant to hold on. Meanwhile he prepared for retirement, and with that in view evacuated his wounded to Laj. There were many steamer loads of these poor fellows, and for want of transport they had to be crowded together like cattle. They bore their sufferings without murmuring. Also through lack of transport and the fire of hostile guns on the right bank of the river, it took two whole days to remove them.

That was unfortunate, because during those two days more Turkish reinforcements had arrived. Eight days earlier (November 17) the India Office had wired out to General Nixon that intelligence received disclosed a Turkish force of 30,000 on the march from Anatolia to Irak (the Bagdad province) under the command of General von der Goltz. Not very cheerful news, it must be admitted. How could Nixon meet such a threat? Wherever it came from, with this further addition to his strength the enemy showed signs of passing to the offensive. And he made, as might be expected, a move threatening to envelop the British right, that is the part of the line farthest from the river, and to throw his cavalry on to the British line of retreat. Unfortunately, once more, besides his inferiority in numbers, Townshend found himself running short of supplies. The transport could not be engaged on that work and on the evacuation of the wounded at the same time. There was not enough of

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it. Besides, the enemy had now posted on the right (or west) bank more batteries designed to bar the passage of the river to Laj. In the circumstances further delay was impossible. Covering the manœuvre by a feint attack the British General gave orders for a retreat.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SIEGE AND FALL OF KUT

Skill of Townshend's retirement from Ctesiphon—Turkish repulse at Umm al Tubal—Opening of the siege of Kut—Townshend's dispositions for defence—Episodes of the siege—Reasons for the stand at Kut—Enemy's first attempt to take Kut by storm—The second, and final, attempt—Preparations for relief—The transport tangle—Haste of the first Relief Expedition—The Turkish blockade works—Effects of transport delays on British operations—Attack on the Turkish positions at Hanna—Causes of its non-success—Townshend's measures for holding out—Enemy air attacks—Second effort at relief; the battle of Es Sinn—Causes of the British reverse—Townshend's Army Order to the Kut garrison—Supplies begin to fail—The third effort of relief—British victory at Hanna and check at Sanna-i-yat—Indecisive attack at Beit Aiessa—Attempts to reprovision Kut by aeroplane—The episode of *Julnar*—Townshend receives instructions to surrender—Preparations for capitulation—Fall after 147 days.

REDUCED by losses both on the march up and in the battle, totalling over 3,500 men, Townshend's little force set out on its retreat from Ctesiphon in the night, on November 25. The Turks at once closed in. The retiring movement had eluded what was intended to be a powerful attack, and the enemy reached the British lines only to find them evacuated. Thus began a march of eight days, which, considering the condition of the troops, the fact that it followed immediately upon a desperate battle, and that it was carried out under the pressure of superior forces, ranks it among the marvels of campaigning alike as regards endurance, daring and leadership. That the British force escaped destruction is to be attributed in part to its still remarkable mobility, notwithstanding that it was worn out—

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compared with what it had been a thing of threads and patches—and in part to the dash and boldness of the cavalry. The enemy had many more guns, but he was less efficient in the cavalry arm. To destroy the British force he had first to bring it to a halt, and then to concentrate his artillery upon it. And there can be no question but that that was his design. While in furtherance of that object he sought repeatedly to envelop the retreating division by manœuvring towards its left, the difficulty was to penetrate the rearguard, supported by a cavalry his own horse could not cope with. Meanwhile, doubtless to his astonishment, the pace of the retreating column showed few signs of slackening. It was a pace with which the Turkish troops found it hard to keep up.

On scanty and insufficient food snatched in haste, with nothing more than brief intervals of sleep, unwashed, footsore, the retiring column tramped on, the boom of guns where the rearguard was in action perpetually in each man's ears. One toilsome day across the monotonous solitude followed another. Night fell, and dog-tired men threw themselves down beside their bivouac fires to rise almost more weary than before. But marvellously few fell out. The camp fires flicked upon faces set and grim, and grimy, but they were those of men who, knowing that they had done great deeds of arms, were confident of themselves, and, despite adversity, confident in their commander. Had not the brilliant episode of Amara proved that they had every reason to be?

Then it was plain that the enemy found this chase by no means a promenade. The Turks were panting after the retreating column, but visibly panting, for the hostile force consisted largely of reinforcements which, in order to arrive at Ctesiphon in time, had already faced a succession of forced marches.

General Townshend reached Laj on November 26, and on that day and the next he rested his troops. On the night of November 27–28 he set out for Aziziya. This movement was not molested.

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On November 29 there was a sharp clash between the British and the Turkish cavalry at Kutunieh. The enemy, attempting to loot stranded river craft, was routed by a charge of the 14th Hussars and the 7th (Hariana) Lancers.

After another night march the main column on November 30 reached Umm al Tubal.

Here, however, a halt became for the time imperative. The flotilla, which accompanied the retreating force, had got into difficulties in the shoals of the river. Under the command of Captain Nunn, R.N., D.S.O., the light river gunboats had rendered brilliant service in covering the supply transports and barges, for it was to them most of all that the enemy had turned his attention. What with sweeping the banks, and getting off barges stranded in the shallows, the crews of the gunboats were at work night and day. Their gallantry was beyond praise.

From Umm al Tubal a Mixed Brigade under the command of General Melliss—"lion-hearted Melliss," as the men called him—was sent forward to keep open the road to Kut. It consisted of the 30th Infantry Brigade, a howitzer battery of the R.F.A., and the 16th (Indian) cavalry.

The enforced halt had enabled the enemy to catch up (November 30) and the same night the Mixed Brigade had hastily to be recalled. Happily they came back in time. They covered 80 miles in three days.

At daybreak (December 1) the Turks launched their attack in great strength. The British, facing towards Ctesiphon, were posted with their left upon the river, and the enemy, in addition to a frontal onset, dispatched a strong column with the object of carrying out a turning movement against the British right. The plan, as a plan, was good. It failed from three causes.

In the first instance the hostile troops told off for the frontal attack found themselves enfiladed from the river by the fire of the gunboats. In this duel *Firefly* was disabled by a shell which penetrated her boiler. She was taken in tow by *Comet*, but both boats grounded,

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and at the finish, though *Firefly* was got off and drifted downstream, *Comet* had to be abandoned. Efforts to tow her off made by *Sumana* were not given up until the Turks had advanced and begun to bombard the vessels at a range of fifty yards. By this time, however, the gunboats had done their work.

For besides this enfilade fire the frontal attack was severely hammered by the British field guns. Townshend wisely concentrated all his artillery upon it, and in the absence of cover he broke it up.

Finally the Cavalry Brigade once more proved its dash by charging into the enemy's encircling column. The troopers, whom the Turkish fire could not check, slashed through the hostile lines, turned, and hewed their way back. The column was thrown into confusion.

In brief, though heavily outnumbered, Townshend, by a masterly use of his resources, had won. He gave the enemy no chance to rally. The march upon Kut was at once renewed in echelons of brigades, a tactic which at once covered the land transport and foiled any further effort to outflank him.

It is extraordinary how long the miles grow on a march of this kind, as day follows day. Halts had to be lengthened, stages shortened. There was no help for it. The column trailed on though still safe, still unbroken. At length, on the eighth day the slender minaret of the solitary mosque of Kut rose above the distant horizon. The guns were booming as usual to the rear, but the toils of this desert tramp were over. In its way, though the reverse manoeuvre, the retreat had been as great a feat as the dash of the "Regatta."

The vanguard reached Kut on December 2; the main body marched in on the 3rd. Not until December 7 could the enemy, after his rough handling at Umm al Tubal, arrive in strength sufficient to attempt an investment. The interval of four days was precious. Kut was already full of wounded who had come down from Ctesiphon in shiploads. Those who could so be disposed of, as well as the Cavalry Brigade and many of the transport animals, were sent downstream to Ali-el-

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Gharbi, while the route yet remained open. The question has been asked why the native population, between 6,000 and 7,000 souls, was not turned out. To that the answer is that nobody then expected the investment to be prolonged, and everybody felt assured of a speedy relief.

The troops needed besides a brief interval of repose. Most had not had the boots off their feet for ten days ; all were war-worn ; many in rags. Discipline, nevertheless, had not been shaken, and the work, when it began, of preparing to stand a siege was pushed with energy.

Kut lies in a somewhat deep bend of the river. The measures of defence were in the first instance to establish an advanced and support line across the neck of the bend, which is about a mile in breadth, and next to secure the village—Woolpress village, as it was called—a sort of outlying suburb on the opposite side of the Tigris, together with the Liquorice Factory adjoining. The factory was loopholed, and the village surrounded by trenches. At this time the village was still connected with Kut by a bridge of boats.

North of Kut, across the neck of the bend, the lines, two miles distant from the town, extended from the old Turkish fort on the right to, on the left, a point on the river about a mile above the Liquorice Factory on the farther bank. The old fort was a square construction, having walls of baked mud about 450 feet in length on each face, and some ten feet in height, but of considerable thickness. They were loopholed. On the north face was a kind of projecting redan called the Bastion. To cover the garrison against shell fire the space inside the fort was converted into a maze of dugouts.

Between the fort and the last houses of the town on that side lay a space occupied for the most part by gardens and groves of date palm. Directly north of the town, facing inland towards the desert, the ground was open and mainly bare. Part of it, however, was a brick-field, marked by a group of kilns, now utilised as observation posts. This brick-field position, capable of a stiff defence if need were, formed a support for the

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centre of the line. Westward, on the farther side of the town and along the river, the gardens and palm groves were again met with. To a certain extent the groves screened the defensive lines here from the enemy's observation posts on the opposite bank.

Taking the force under General Townshend's command, these dispositions were, as events proved, thoroughly sound. As much was made of the resources as could be done, but not too much. Accommodation had to be provided for about 3,000 horses and pack mules, besides heavy battery bullocks. Could the length of the siege have been foreseen it would, of course, have been a desirable measure to have reduced the numbers of these various animals from the first and thus have saved a very large consumption of barley, but that the force would be beleaguered in Kut for five long months was neither at this date nor for many weeks later considered even a probability.

Previously to the siege the base hospital had been just outside of and to the north-west of the town, on the edge of the western area of gardens. It had with all haste to be removed. Beds, apparatus, furniture and injured men had to be carried into the town itself, a huddled mass of more or less mean houses bordering narrow lanes. The wounded were disposed as well as it could be done in the buildings judged most suitable and in the bazaars. The devotion and efficiency of the Medical Service were, considering its straitened resources, admirable.

All along the line outside there was trench-digging, sand-bagging, the construction of dugouts and the excavation of dumps for munitions. The preparations for a siege are manifold, and in the interval before the enemy closed in they went on night and day. Happily for the time being there was no cause for anxiety as regarded food supplies.

Kut, needless to say, might have been abandoned, for, with the start he had gained, it was open to Townshend, had he thought fit, after a day or two days' interval, to have continued his march. Apart, however,

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from the risks and hardships involved in covering the 180 more miles separating him from Amara, there were the assurances he had received of comparatively speedy relief, and the importance, military as well as political, of holding up the enemy at Kut. A Turkish advance upon Amara would have threatened to undo the whole results so far of the Mesopotamia Expedition. Townshend, too, was still in communication with the outside world through his wireless installation, and on December 8 he issued the announcement that reinforcements might be expected at Sheik Saad a week from that date. Sheik Saad is some 25 miles farther down the Tigris. Apparently an intimation to that effect had been wirelessly from Basra. The non-arrival of these reinforcements proved to be the first of a series of disappointments.

So far the enemy's activity had been confined to sniping, and to turning back by gunfire the last steamers which had tried to run the blockade with wounded on board. On December 9, however, the Turkish bombardment opened. In the midst of it the enemy made an effort to rush the bridge of boats which lay slightly up stream. The attempt was gallantly beaten off, but, seeing that it was certain to be renewed, and that the post at the farther end of the bridge had been driven in, it was decided to blow up the structure at the farther end so that, broken, it might be swung by the current on to the Kut side of the river. It was urgent to prevent the enemy from seizing the boats and other material. Two men, Lieut. A. B. Matthews, R.E., and Lieut. R. T. Sweet, of the Gurkha Rifles, volunteered for this perilous piece of service. It was necessary to wait until dead of night. Then in the darkness the two had to swim the river, no easy thing against a four-knot current, and over a distance of nearly 250 yards. After that, if undetected, they had to plant their charge of explosive and fire it. For those concerned in the duty there was, following the departure of the two heroes, for heroes they were, an interval of acute suspense. The odds seemed dead against them, and the attempt would have

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been none the less devoted and daring had it failed. Presently, however, from near the farther side of the dark expanse of water the night was stabbed by a flash, followed by a roar, and a wild outburst of hostile rifle shots. The bridge began to heave and swing. The two men got back safely.

The news of this exploit ran through the lines with the cheering effect of a victory. There was at the same time the story of the Brigadier-General who at the wildest of personal risks had dashed out across the bridge after two of his officers had fallen wounded in defence of it, and tried to carry one of them in. And it was a good thing, perhaps, that this cheerful news came out, for the following morning (December 10) the enemy made his first attempt to take Kut by storm. His opening assault was beaten, so was a second and a third. But these repulses, severe as they were, proved not enough. In the afternoon a fourth attack came forward. It met with no better fortune. The British troops had set their teeth and were not to be shifted. Towards evening there was a last burst. The dirty little town was deafened with the roar of battle. The roar, however, died down without coming nearer. Once more the enemy had been flung back.

He was not satisfied with this trial of strength. Next morning, under cover of a heavy shell fire, he again came forward. It was only an additional and costly disappointment. The British defences looked slight, and to all appearances a mass attack ought to have romped over them. The appearances were deceptive. The value of a trench is the value of the men in it.

Thus foiled the foe fell back upon his batteries, and day by day, at irregular intervals, indulged in bursts of shooting, accompanied by sniping which was not irregular but persistent. Behind the lines the bombardment caused relatively few casualties. While the projectiles rained down there was an absence of all signs of life above ground; nothing to indicate that some thousands of men were ready to spring out at a moment's warning. The force had dug itself in to some pur-

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pose. Most of the misery of the shelling was felt in the town.

For a fortnight after their last repulse the Turks made no further move. There was little save the monotony of morning and evening "hates." While waiting for the relief, of which as yet there was no sign, General Townshend kept his own eye on everything; toured along the lines; visited dugouts; went through the hospitals; inspected the commissariat; and saw that no man wanted what ought to be and could be supplied. Everywhere he had a cheery and appropriate word. Meanwhile, both in the town and in the lines, the chief topic of speculation was the date of the relief. Opinion generally looked for it at about Christmas.

Christmas approached and outside headquarters nothing more definite was to be gleaned than rumours. The enemy's bursts of fire had evidently in his opinion not had the desired effect of causing the besieged to waste their ammunition. Acting on the counsel of their General they husbanded it "like gold." Realising that the blockade was likely to be prolonged; anxious to push in force down the river before the British established their footing in the country; and fearing that if held Kut would probably in the finish be relieved, the enemy, having brought up further and considerable reinforcements—another division—once more essayed a storming enterprise. It was preceded on December 24 by a great bombardment. Every gun of the Turkish forces on both sides of the river was put into action. This general shelling, of course, was intended to mask the point of the attack, which it was known would be the sequel. The point of the attack proved to be the fort. By a concentration of guns upon it the Bastion had been breached, and though to a certain extent the breach had been offset by wiring in, the enemy threw forward what no doubt he judged to be an overwhelming column of some 6,000 infantry. They pressed onward, in the face of a withering fire and, although the losses were most severe, and hundreds perished upon the wire the others swarmed through the breach and into the

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Bastion, carried forward by the impetus of numbers. The British batteries, however, were in turn focussed on the work, and its mud walls crumbled into ruins. And in the gap beyond it was found that the defenders had built up an inner breastwork. The Turks tried to rush it. They tried again and again. Time and again it came to a struggle at close quarters, only, however, yet again to prove that the Turk was no match for the veterans of the Indian Army with the bayonet. Meanwhile, efforts had been made to scale the walls of the main fort, men climbing on each other's shoulders, or using short ladders. Nowhere could a footing be established. In the midst of this deadly conflict the guns on both sides were busy, and squalls of shrapnel lashed assailants and defenders alike. The defence, which was magnificent, finally triumphed. So magnificent was it, indeed, and so severe this time had been the lesson, that this was the last endeavour to take Kut by assault. In and around the ruins of the Bastion, and the walls of the main fort, the enemy's dead lay everywhere. The total Turkish losses in this, for them, disastrous affair were some 2,000 men.

Christmas Day dawned in peace; after the pandemonium and carnage of the day and night before a silence reigned that seemed as strange as it was impressive. Not a shot was fired. In the still cold air—for the weather was now wintry—the snow-clad Pusht-i-Kuh mountains marking the boundary of the great plain and the uplands of Persia reared themselves clear and majestic on the eastern horizon. The smoke of fires from dugouts floated lazily upward, but over all brooded a Sabbath stillness, and in dugouts and billets the thoughts of men turned from that far away land to home. For two months and more they had been without letters or news, save that which the wireless told them of the world's doings.

Of course it was only a pause. Next day observers on the brick kilns saw that the enemy was busy moving his batteries. The intention soon appeared. He was transferring guns from north of Kut to the opposite

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side of the river, where from above the Liquorice Factory he might enfilade the British lines. Evidently he was desirous of speeding up the siege and the reason was that the Relief Force had reached Ali-el-Gharbi, as the crow flies forty miles downstream.

On the face of it this looked hopeful. Unfortunately the preparations for the relief of Kut were marked by the same hustle and the same oversight of the essentials of the campaign as had pushed Townshend into an enterprise which had not even a fair chance of success. In the middle of December Sir John Nixon had resigned his command. The ground officially given out was ill-health and in poor health the General certainly was, for his worries and anxieties would have broken down any man. To put it plainly, he had had enough. Only too well was he aware that though, in fact, his proceedings, the affair of Kut apart, had been marvellously successful, the blame of the Kut affair would be laid at his door, while the credit of the Amara dash would be taken by those who had had nothing whatever to do with it save to add to its difficulties. Nixon, on resigning, was succeeded by Sir Percy Lake, Chief of the Staff of the Indian Army, an experienced and capable soldier, and he had arrived at Basra in company with General Sir F. Aylmer, Adjutant-General of the Indian Army, appointed at the same time to take command of what had now been designated the "Tigris Corps." The latter was to be reinforced by two divisions of the Indian Army sent back from France, as well as by Indian troops returned from Egypt after service in Gallipoli. At this time there were in Mesopotamia, besides Townshend's troops, nothing more than the remains of the 12th Division, under Gorringe, a mere handful, not only reduced by the fatigues of a hard campaign, but burdened with the duty of policing nearly 400 miles of river, as well as the occupation of a province nearly as large in area as Great Britain. A stand at Kut was, in the circumstances, imperative. No other course, indeed, could have saved the situation.

But numbers were not the chief concern. The old

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problem of transport was still unsolved. The troops from France had been sent off to Basra in hot haste, and the orders were to push up to Kut without delay. How the troops were to be pushed up to Kut was left to the men on the spot. Owing to the haste of embarkation the reinforcing divisions arrived piecemeal—parts of one and parts of another. General Aylmer well knew it would take time to piece them together again. But he also knew that he could not afford the time and must make the best of it. A Staff of sorts had to be improvised, and the Staff went to work to lick the Expedition into some kind of shape. The force had very few heavy guns; in that respect, as already noted, the equipment of the Indian Army had been starved. Then there was the question—the question—of movement. The transport was no larger than it had been six months before. Insufficient as it had been then, it was doubly so now, since exactly twice the work had, somehow, to be done. A service which 500 tons of river shipping could barely have met was by some means or another to be conjured out of 150 tons. Of course that was the root of all the troubles. Political policies and plans were changed by those who treated this problem of transport as a detail. It was so essential a detail, however, that of the reinforcements which reached Basra, some 12,000 men were never able to get up the Tigris at all, and spent week after week at the base in inactivity. Had they been movable, these 12,000 men would have made all the difference.

Aylmer set out with a column at once hastily got together, badly equipped for attacks upon entrenched positions, and impeded in its mobility. Though he met with no opposition of any moment before reaching Ali-el-Gharbi, the greater part of a month had gone by before he could advance his force so far, and in face of the impediments to have advanced so far was, in truth, good going. As before, the effects of deficiencies in transport fell upon the troops. The column had been got up to Amara by instalments. Beyond Amara the route had to be covered on foot, and the pace had to

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be regulated to the movement on the river of the supplies on which the Expedition was dependent.

One cause of the pressure put upon Headquarters at Basra was the fear that the enemy might mass reinforcements so formidable as to render the relief of Kut impracticable; another, that he was known to be fortifying on both banks of the river. There was good ground for each of these apprehensions, as events proved. By this time, the beginning of 1916, the Russians, under General Baratoff, had in Persia pushed on to Kermansbah; a sufficient reason for the Turks to put forth a special effort in Mesopotamia, and all the more reason because it was assumed that in the depth of the winter in the Caucasus, where the temperature is arctic, operations on either side were out of the question for the next three months. Under the influence of that belief, added to the Russian menace in Persia, the enemy had little hesitation in sending down the Tigris all the troops his communications would allow, and it was moderate to estimate those forces at 30,000 men. Of course, it is now known that the Grand Duke Nicholas, the new Russian Commander-in-Chief in the Caucasus, seized upon this opening to bring off the marvellous surprise march over the mountains north of Erzerum, which resulted in the fall of that fortress. It was the one positive good which the ill-wind of Kut yielded.

As to the second ground of apprehension, the enemy, when it became evident that Kut could not be taken by storm, and would have to be starved out, naturally turned his attention mainly to preventing the relief of the place. The position was peculiar in this respect. So long as he was between Kut and Amara, and could so maintain himself on both banks of the river, Kut was effectually isolated. It was only necessary to keep up round the town itself a blockade that might prevent the garrison from coming out into the open and co-operating with the relieving column. The real blockadeworks, therefore, were not the enemy's lines round Kut, but those at Hanna and Sanna-i-yat on the east side of the Tigris, and those at Es Sinn on the west side. The defences on the

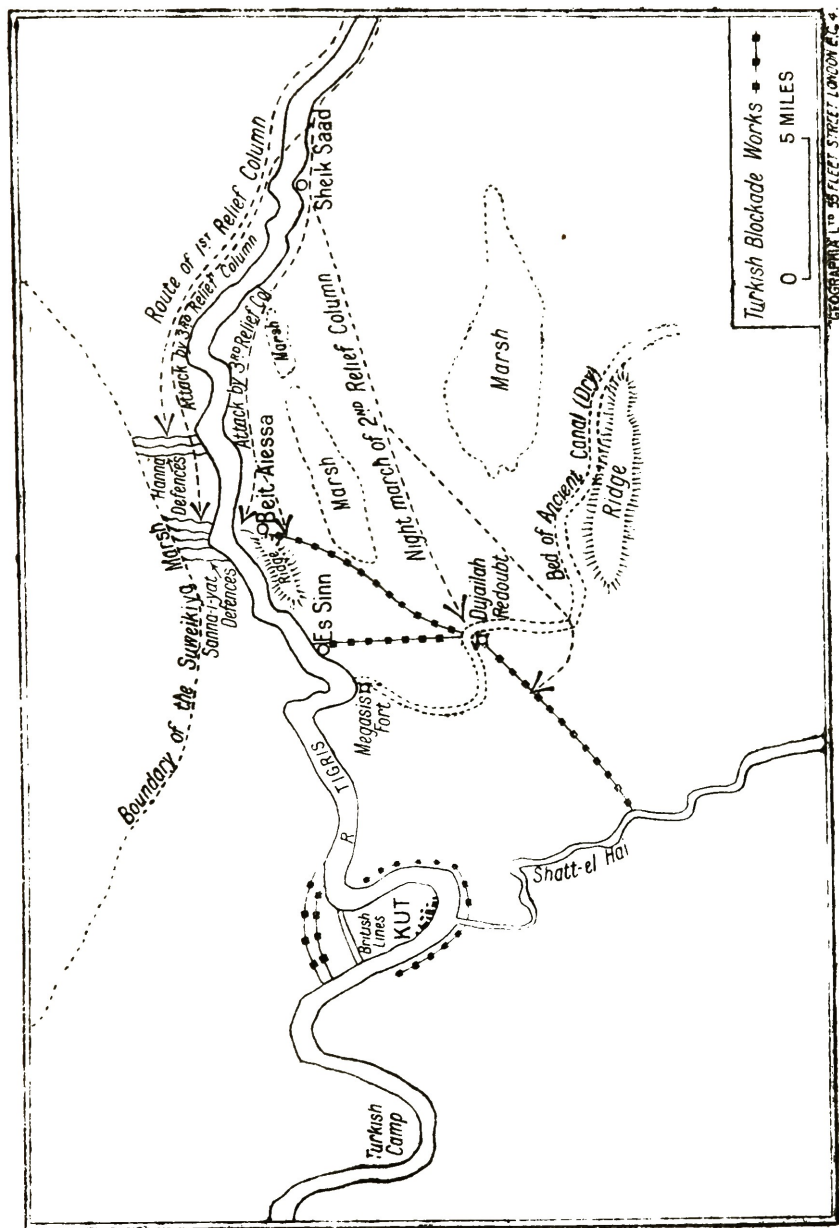
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east side consisted merely of lines of trenches cut parallel one behind the other ; those on the west side were more elaborate—a chain of redoubts extending from the Tigris to the Shatt-el-Hai, one of the ancient main canals connecting the Tigris with the Euphrates, and still in the rainy season navigable, despite ages of neglect, by the native mahelas, flat-bottomed craft of the felucca type, exactly like those used in the days of the Babylonians. The chain of redoubts cut off a considerable triangle of country of which it formed the base and the Tigris and the Shatt-el-Hai the sides, with the junction of the canal and the river, just opposite to Kut, as the apex. This hostile disposition was skilful, and the western bank defences were more carefully made because the enemy before the finish realised that here lay the key of the position.

His great risk was that of a force striking up the Shatt-el-Hai from Nazariyeh, where the canal joins the Euphrates, or striking across the country from Amara, and turning him. Plans of a turning movement had suggested themselves to General Aylmer. They were, however, not approved. It was unfortunate, because at this time and for some time afterwards the enemy's defences on the west side of the river were incomplete.

It was unfortunate also that though the relieving column reached Ali-el-Gharbi about Christmas Day, attack upon the enemy there had to be delayed owing to transport difficulties for more than a week. In these matters celerity is everything. To Khalil Pasha, the Turkish commander, the interval was beyond estimation. In the course of it more Turkish reinforcements arrived, and one of the Turkish proceedings was to form at Shumran, where the line of redoubts joined the Tigris, an entrenched camp from which troops might either be ferried over the river, or used to stiffen the defence of the Es Sinn line as the case might be.

The winter rains too had now set in, so that the vast swamps which diversify the arid spaces of the country became shallow lakes. This weather was all against the relieving operations. Nevertheless, the Turks,



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attacked and beaten at Ali-el-Gharbi, were obliged to fall back upon Sheik Saad, twenty miles farther up stream and as the crow flies the same distance below Kut. If they had to contend against a complication of impediments the troops of the Relieving Force made up for them to no small extent in military qualities. Indeed, had they not done so the whole enterprise would have been on the very face of it hopeless. The day after the fight at Ali-el-Gharbi the enemy was followed up, and again, on January 6, attacked at Sheik Saad, and again defeated with a loss of 4,500 men. He fell back this time upon the Wadi, a tributary of the Tigris, not very wide, but defensible because, like the main river, its banks are slightly raised above the level of the surrounding country, these low ridges, or bunds, forming traces of ancient embankments. The passage of the Wadi having been forced (January 9), the next retreat was to Hanna, rather less than 15 miles below Kut. Unhappily, partly owing to the wet ground, partly owing to the shortage of artillery equipment, which had had to be kept to the lowest point because of the limited transport, the losses of the Relieving Force in these successive actions had totalled nearly 6,000 men. It was thus that defects and oversights had to be paid for. Carefully, however, as they had been husbanded, the artillery munitions had run very low. General Aylmer had now, therefore, either to wait for a further supply and suspend his operations in the meantime, or to continue his offensive. He chose the latter course, not merely because his orders were urgent, but because it was evident that if he suspended his activities, the enemy, divining the reason, would counter-attack. Besides he had the Turks on the move, and it was clearly advisable to keep them moving. He took such measures as were possible to bring his force into a fit condition, got up all the supplies he could, and after an interval of eleven days, renewed the assault.

Situated between a flooded swamp and the great waterway, the Turkish position at Hanna consisted of five lines of trenches, each line some 200 yards behind

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the other and connected by numerous saps. This formidable maze had to be attacked (January 21) after very inadequate artillery preparation. The attack failed, and it would have been a miracle if it had not. There are some things which not the bravest troops can accomplish. The valour and vigour of the attack, handicapped as it was, was shown by the desperate and bloody character of the conflict. On the left the attacking troops (the Black Watch, 6th Jats and 41st Dogras) broke in, but they could not break through. Absence of a sufficient weight of guns allowed the enemy to retreat from line to line, where an adequate power in guns would have destroyed his saps and barraged his retirement. In the circumstances, the farther the British pushed forward the worse their position became. In the end they had to be withdrawn. Their losses ran up to 2,741 men. It was a disaster.

The Turks also, however, had been heavily punished, as they had been in all the preceding battles, but to them immediately these losses were of less consequence. It was enough that they had brought the Relieving Force to a halt.

The Force had by this time been, in fact, crippled by its casualties. At every turn the transport trouble cropped up.

In the interval the enemy, more especially after his reverse at Sheik Saad, had pressed his bombardment of Kut. News of the success at Sheik Saad had greatly raised the hopes and confidence of the besieged, but at the Serail, where General Townshend had fixed his headquarters, the obstacles before the Relieving Force were better appreciated, and the General took the precaution to cut down the rations by one-third. In the circumstances this was cheerfully accepted. Informed before the action at Hanna of its doubtful chances, he again cut the rations to one-half.

Three days later came the news of the Hanna repulse. Save at Headquarters, it was not yet realised that the first attempt at relief had failed. Nevertheless, common confidence in the Relief Expedition fell. The defences

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of the town were stiffened. The boom of distant guns had told that help was at hand, but the sound, after drawing nearer, first continued in the same place, and then by degrees died away. To add to the depression, the rain came steadily down, turning the trenches into ditches and the narrow lanes of Kut into quagmires. The river too had begun to rise, and in places to overflow the bunds and pour across the flat country. Dugouts and trenches, British and Turkish alike, were flooded. The weather also was cold, and fuel becoming scarce, though all timber had been requisitioned, and was doled out with strict economy, by half-pounds.

Evidently the question now was how long Kut could hold out. There was a conference at Headquarters on the state of supplies. As soon as the siege had begun the native population, and particularly the dealers, had made haste to hide all foodstuffs and live on the rations served out. It was manifest, however, both that covert dealing in foodstuffs went on and that there were many hoards, for very few of the native inhabitants showed traces of privation. A systematic search was accordingly set on foot, and resulted in unearthing various valuable finds of both grain and ghee, the clarified butter of the East. These seizures were mostly the stocks of traders who had done a thriving illicit business. General satisfaction and a certain surprise were felt when a *communiqué* was given out from Headquarters that there was still food enough to last for eighty-four days, not counting the battery bullocks, horses and mules.

A great help to the provisioning was the arrival by aeroplane of a set of millstones. In abandoning Kut the Turks had taken care to remove those in the only flour mill in the place. Millstones in Mesopotamia are now, as they have been for ages, as precious as they are scarce, for the country is devoid of stone. The dropping of these very welcome and friendly "bombs" enabled the mill to be restarted.

Possibly it was this incident which suggested to the enemy the employment of aeroplanes as machines for

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attack as well as for observation. If an aeroplane could carry a millstone why not a bomb as heavy as a millstone? Already the Germans, who were really directing the siege and had their quarters at Bagdad under the direction of General von der Goltz, had done everything in their power to add to its "frightfulness." They had established on the farther bank of the Tigris batteries of trench mortars, which they had revived from the wars of the seventeenth century, and lobbed into the town from across the river heavy cylindrical bombs filled with high explosive. This and the shelling not being deemed enough, they resorted to air raids, one of the earliest, if not the earliest, employment of aeroplanes for such a purpose in the War. The first raid took place in the middle of February, and the enemy 'planes came over in three relays. The bombs were dropped, not along the defensive lines, but on the town, and the chief sufferers were the native population, a number of children among them. After that red crosses were painted conspicuously on the roofs of buildings used as hospitals, and empty shell cases were set up as alarm gongs. The Red Cross sign had no effect. The probabilities, indeed, were that the indication of hospital buildings did more harm than good, for in a later raid a bomb fell into the main hospital in the bazaar, killing and wounding more than thirty of the unhappy sick.

Coincidentally the ordinary bombardment was intensified, and more especially at night when shells were thrown into the town indiscriminately. It was evident that the enemy, informed that the operations for the relief of the place were to be renewed, was exasperated by the obstinacy of the garrison, and the prolongation of the blockade. But General Townshend had made up his mind for the present to sit tight, and was taking all the measures to hold out for weeks longer if necessary. He economised his corn partly by serving out dried potato meal, partly by mixing the bread ration with barley meal and atta, and partly by slaughtering the battery bullocks and horses, the latter a double

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economy. Unfortunately, scurvy now made its appearance, and the Indian troops would not touch the ration of meat. For the feeding of the native population soup kitchens were opened.

In the midst of these embarrassments came the news by wireless that reinforcements for the Relief Force were on their way from Egypt, and (February 17) the welcome intelligence of the fall of Erzerum, together with a message from the King paying tribute to the steadfastness of the besieged and exhorting them to hold on.

A day or two later the boom of guns could once more be heard from down the river, and hope revived when (February 21) officers received secret orders to be ready for a break out on the morrow. The morrow came and passed. Nothing happened. The roar of the guns remained distant. Rations were now further cut. It was known there must be another period of waiting.

This suspense lasted until March 7, when for the second time there were secret orders. That night the guns again thundered, but louder and nearer. Next day (March 8) the Turkish Commander sent in an officer under the white flag demanding surrender. Townshend refused. He made another cut in the rations.

What had occurred was the Battle of Es Sinn. Those in authority had found out at last—in the school of experience—that the real point of attack was on the west side of the river. It was concluded that the attack ought to be made upon the line of redoubts, by this time extended to the Shatt-el-Hai. Now that was a serious undertaking, and the more serious because the Tigris was in full flood—higher than it had been for many a year—and movement over the country far from easy. The Relieving Force besides was, in the matter of munitions and supplies, living from hand to mouth.

But the decision was taken because it was believed that, despite these difficulties, a successful surprise might be brought off. The central point of support in the Turkish defences between the Tigris and the Shatt-el-Hai was a considerable work called the Dujailah

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redoubt. At this point the line of the Turkish defences was crossed by the bed of an ancient tributary of the main river, dry in the summer season, but a sinuous swamp during the wet months, and the Dujailah redoubt was situated at the point of one of the bends, and on the farther side, so that it was partly surrounded by a sort of natural ditch. Both the apparent security of the position and the difficulty of obtaining on the spot a supply of drinkable water had led the enemy so far to hold the redoubt lightly. If he could be surprised and the bend or peninsula on which the redoubt was built seized, his line west of the Tigris would be effectually broken and the siege of Kut would have to be raised.

To effect the surprise a night attack was determined upon. The main assault was to be direct, but a force under the command of General Kemball was on the left to carry out a turning movement, the alarm of which, falling upon the Turks' right rear at or about the beginning of the direct assault should, it was thought, ensure success.

Of course, to bring off a surprise it was essential to mislead the enemy. The troops told off, about 20,000 of all arms, were on the Tigris close to the Wadi. From that point, far enough away apparently to cause doubt as to their intentions, they were to strike across country to the Es Sinn line, a distance of some 15 miles. An interval of about nine hours was allowed for this march. According to the plan they were to arrive just before daybreak. It happened, however, that the arrangements for the assembly at the rendezvous did not work as had been expected, and that more than the allowed for margin of time was lost at starting. Further on the road the column in the darkness missed its way. Another hour was lost on that account. It was a long march, and apart from it many of the troops had had to cover a good distance to the rendezvous before setting out. In that wet season the going was heavy. The men were fatigued. At the halts they fell dead asleep, and were only aroused with difficulty. They were in no condition on arrival to fight a hard battle.

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Having to make a detour, General Kemball's force, with the Cavalry Brigade, had of necessity to cover a greater distance. It proved unable to reach the point marked out for attack until after full daylight (March 9) being already two and a half hours behind time when it diverged from the column under the command of Major-General Keary.

The Dujailah redoubt was found as anticipated to be held in no great strength. Time, however, was taken up in deploying the attacking troops and in waiting for the turning movement. The interval—some three hours—enabled the Turks to reinforce the menaced position. The turning movement too had not as a surprise succeeded. To the extreme fatigue of the troops was added, in the case of Keary's column, shortage of water. The assault on the Dujailah redoubt and adjacent positions was launched and persisted in during that day (March 9). There was a moment towards the end of this bloody conflict when the enemy, severely pressed, showed signs of wavering. Despite their fatigues the British troops (the Manchesters, and the 59th Rifles and part of the 37th) had fought with determination and had won a footing in the redoubt. But the airmen reported no evidences of a hostile retirement, and the risks of continuing the battle in face of the weariness of the troops and their sufferings from thirst were undoubtedly grave. They appeared to General Aylmer too grave. At nightfall therefore the attack was abandoned. It had been a costly reverse. The second attempt at relief had broken down.

Next day (March 10) General Townshend issued a *communiqué*. He had followed the policy of taking the garrison as far as possible into his confidence.

"We have now," he wrote, "stood a three months' siege in a manner which has called upon you the praise of our beloved King and our fellow countrymen in England, Scotland, Ireland and India, and all this after your brilliant battles of Kut-el-Amara and Ctesiphon, and your retirement to Kut, all of which feats of arms are famous. Since December 5, 1915, you have

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spent three months of cruel uncertainty, and to all men uncertainty is intolerable. On the top of this comes the second failure to relieve us. I ask you to give a little sympathy to me, who has commanded in these battles, and having come to you as a stranger now love my command with a depth of feeling I have never in my life known before. When I mention myself I mention also the Generals under me, whose names are distinguished in the Army as leaders of men. I am speaking to you as I did before, straight from the heart, and I ask your sympathy for my feelings, having promised you relief on certain dates on the promise of those ordered to relieve us. Not their fault no doubt. Do not think I blame them ; they are giving their lives freely and deserve our gratitude and admiration. But I want you to help me as before. . . . In order to hold out I am killing a large number of horses so as to reduce the grain eaten every day, and I have had to reduce your ration. It is necessary to do this in order to keep our flag flying. I am determined to hold out and I know that you are with me heart and soul."

Rations still further reduced notwithstanding, the besieged "stuck it" without murmuring. After the battle of Es Sinn the enemy not only pressed his bombardment, but his air raids, and beyond these endurances were the inundations. The river continued to rise and went on rising until it reached and then passed the highest flood record. On March 13 the siege had lasted 100 days. Hopes of relief had not been given up. They were no longer, however, the subject of lively speculation, nor, indeed, of any speculation at all.

Thus the month of March wore slowly away. At the beginning of April the supplies of grain at length failed and as vegetables to garnish the ration of horse meat it became necessary to cut the grass and herbs in the suburban gardens. This stuff was served boiled. Meanwhile the Turks were observed to be shifting heavy guns, using teams of men for haulage. On April 4 an intense and sustained gunfire was heard from down the river.

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It was the roar of the battle at Sanna-i-yat—the third effort of relief.

The effort had been renewed because of the arrival from Egypt of the 13th Division, under the command of Sir Stanley Maude, and the qualities of that brilliant General as a tactician were in the attack on April 5 disclosed in the capture by his Division of five lines of trenches. There is here on the one side the Tigris and on the other the great Suweikiya swamp with between them a neck of firm land some two miles in width. The Hanna position was at the end of the neck farthest from Kut; the Sanna-i-yat position at the end of the neck nearest to Kut. The British attack was delivered on both sides of the Tigris, and it was entirely successful. The enemy, turned out of the maze at Hanna, and outflanked by the loss of his defences on the farther side of the river at the same time, found himself obliged to fall back. He attempted a stand midway at Falahiyeh, but was again routed by Maude's Division in a night attack, and forced to retire upon the Sanna-i-yat maze. He was followed up and (April 6) attacked by the 7th Division. The troops got in, and they might possibly have held on were it not that the Tigris that day broke over the bunds and swamped the trenches. During the next two days the floods suspended operations, but on the 9th the water had so far fallen as apparently to justify a renewal, and, as every day was now of consequence, the assault was resumed by the 13th Division, though the ground was still sodden and sticky. All the same the 13th carried the first line of the enemy's trenches. But they could get no farther. Their supports, indeed, found it impossible to advance over spaces already churned into deep mud, and part of the ground gained had to be given up.

On the face of it as well as in fact the situation was grave. It was calculated by General Townshend that his supplies, other than horse flesh, of which he had still a considerable supply, would last on the reduced scale until April 15, and that appeared to be the limit,

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because, though some pressed by hunger ate it, most of the Indian troops would not touch the horse meat. Learning that the Relief Force had been compelled to dig in and realising that that meant delay, he arranged to eke out his now fast vanishing stores until April 21—a week longer.

Meanwhile Sir Percy Lake had come up from Basra, and it was decided at a consultation of the general officers on the spot, General Sir G. F. Gorringe having succeeded Sir F. Aylmer in the Command of the Relief Troops, that the attempt at relief ought not to be abandoned, notwithstanding the flooded state of the country. The fighting was accordingly renewed, and on the west bank of the river the enemy was (April 17) pressed back upon Beit Aiessa, four miles farther up than Sanna-i-yat, and his first and part of his second line of defences were captured. But in the position at Sanna-i-yat the Turks, the flooded river on the one side of them, the great swamp on the other, and a quagmire in front, held on, because though enfiladed from across the waterway they were not as at Hanna liable to be caught in a trap.

And now began belated attempts to reprovision Kut by means of aeroplanes dropping sacks of flour. It is a mistake to suppose that this expedient was not as an expedient successful. Many trips were made and many sacks dropped, two from each machine. A few, it is true, missed and tumbled into the Turkish lines, but only a few. The mistake lay in not having resorted to the expedient weeks earlier and keeping it up. Had that been done Kut might have held out. The flour thus received did enable the defence to be prolonged for two days. It was, however, a mere trifle compared with what was needed.

On April 18 the Turks counter-attacked at Beit Aiessa and lost heavily. First the news was wirelessly that relief might be looked for in a few days. Then came (April 20) the further news that the Relief Force was "consolidating its positions." Depressing intelligence, which, as bad news usually does, leaked out, with the

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result that next day (April 21) some natives attempted to desert the town but were caught crossing the Turkish lines and sent back. It was now clear that, failing relief, the end was not far off. The third attempt to raise the siege had met with no better fortune than the others.

Hope, nevertheless, was not yet entirely given up. A final effort to reprovision the besieged was to be made by *Julnar*, one of the steamers of the transport service. It was desperate work to run the blockade, for just below Kut on the farther side of the river, and commanding a sharp bend was Fort Megasis, armed with ordnance heavier than anything any river gunboat could carry. So desperate was the chance that it was certain *Julnar*, though one of the fastest steamers of the flotilla, could only get through, if at all, by the merest fluke. A Royal Navy crew, under Lieut. Firman, R.N., assisted by Lieut.-Commander Cowley, R.N.V.R., volunteered to take her. With none save these devoted men on board, and loaded with 270 tons of supplies, she set out (April 24) breasting in the darkness the current of the swollen and swirling river. It was a daring but a vain endeavour. As she attempted to dash past, her boilers at top pressure, the guns of the fort opened upon her, firing shot after shot. Firman fell, and Cowley at the wheel went down. Automatically and blindly the vessel, raked by shell, raced on, but it was a race to destruction. She raced on, foundering now at the same time, and, caught broadside on by the current, was swung on to a mudbank, her Captain stretched on deck in a pool of his own blood, her engineer dead at his post below.

On that same day in Kut the first half of the emergency ration was eaten, and men knew that it was at last the end. During the next two days the flour dropped by the aeroplanes, doled out in quarter rations, kept the besieged going. But on April 27 General Townshend went out to treat with the Turkish Commander, Khalil Pasha. He had received by wireless positive instructions to do so, under the impression that he might get more

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favourable terms. The only terms offered were unconditional surrender. The last of the emergency ration had been consumed.

On April 28 began the preparation for surrender ; the blowing to pieces of guns, the smashing up of rifles, the dumping of ammunition into the river after darkness. Men put their swords under their feet and snapped them, dashed their field glasses to pieces, and threw their revolvers into cesspools. Everything likely to be of value to the enemy was made away with.

In the midst of this came through a message from General Lake. "The C.-in-C.," it ran, "desires me to convey to you and your brave and devoted troops his appreciation of the manner in which you together have undergone the sufferings and hardships of the siege, and of the high spirit of devotion to duty in which you have met the call of your Sovereign and Empire. The C.-in-C.'s sentiments are shared by myself, General Goringe, and all the troops of the Tigris column. We can only express extreme disappointment and regret that our effort to relieve you should not have been crowned with success." The officers and men of the Royal Navy attached to the Tigris Corps sent also a message of regret.

All had done their utmost under the conditions, and, although it had not succeeded, that utmost had proved what might have been done had the conditions been reasonable. They were not.

So on April 29, after 147 days, five long months, the British flag at Kut came down and the white flag went up.

## CHAPTER IX

### GALLIPOLI : THE SUMMER CAMPAIGN, 1915

Anzacs assigned a secondary rôle—Why a strategical error—Turkish efforts to destroy the Anzacs—Their failure—Enemy scheme for containing the force—Episodes of the fighting—The great Turkish attack of May 18-19—Its crushing defeat—Operations before Achi Baba—Cox's enterprise at Gurkha bluffs—General Hamilton decides upon siege tactics—Their disadvantages—Resumption of British attacks—Battle of June 4—Frontal assault disastrous—General Hunter-Weston suggests new tactics—The battle of June 28—British victory—Success not followed up—Final enemy attempt to crush the Anzacs—Battle of June 29, another heavy Turkish reverse—General Hamilton's demand for reinforcements—Battle of July 12.

It is now advisable to resume the narrative of the Gallipoli Expedition as from the first battle for Krithia (May 6, 1915). The broad plan of General Hamilton's operations, it will be recalled, was an attack upon the enemy's defences on Achi Baba—this attack launched from the southern toe of the peninsula ; and a menace in flank against the enemy's defences on Sari Bair—a menace maintained by the Australian and New Zealand forces from Kaba Tepe.

From the outset the fact had been manifest that an attack from the southern toe would be materially assisted by a flanking movement. When General Hamilton was considering his future proceedings in March and the early part of April, one of the insistent problems was a dispersal of the enemy's strength. Upon that and upon rapidity in the development of the British attack everything, indeed, depended. Hardly less was it evident from a study of the natural features

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of Gallipoli, and of the roads and railways then at the enemy's command, that an effective dispersal would have been a landing not only at Kaba Tepe but at Suvla. In March, at any rate, the enemy's communications between Suvla and Maidos were defective. Nor had he at that date any defensive works on Sari Bair. If General Hamilton then gave this matter of a landing at Suvla his serious attention, as presumably he did, he decided against such a movement because in his judgment the forces at his disposal were not numerous enough. Resolving upon the alternative plan of a main attack launched from the landing places round the southern toe, he had, as already recorded, been reduced to the necessity of undertaking a succession of very costly frontal assaults. The opportunity offered by the success of Koe's landing had been missed.

Had that, however, been the only defect in the dispositions, it would, though it cost many casualties, not have involved the Expedition in disaster. Unfortunately, there was another and a kindred oversight yet more grave.

In his despatch dated August 26, 1915, the General alludes to the *rôle* which during May and June had been assigned to the Anzacs. This *rôle*, he explained, was "first to keep an open door leading to the vitals of the Turkish position; secondly, to hold up as large a body as possible of the enemy so as to lessen the strain at Cape Helles. Anzac, in fact, was cast to play second fiddle to Cape Helles, a part out of harmony with the dare-devil spirit animating these warriors from the South, and so it has come about that the defensive of the Australians and New Zealanders has always tended to take on the character of an attack."

That statement is worth careful consideration. It discloses the reasons for the military failure which formed the sequel.

General Hamilton's plan, as events proved, was unfortunately wrong. The Anzac position was the point of effective attack from the outset. To assign a defensive *rôle* to a flanking movement was an error in

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any event. By itself, the mere holding of a bit of the coast near Kaba Tepe meant nothing. If there was any purpose in landing there at all, it was precisely in order that this movement should "take on the character of an attack," and had the dare-devil spirit of the warriors from the South, a quality in war as precious as it is exceptional, been given free play from the beginning, no doubt can now be felt that these warriors from the South would have swept the Turks off Sari Bair and with moderate support might have pushed them back to Maidos. No doubt can now be felt on this point, because in the encounters between these dare-devil warriors and the Turks, the latter were slaughtered time and again in a proportion not far short of ten to one. But, in place of using these fine troops with the boldness which both their value and the situation demanded, the commander of the Expedition, unhappily alike for himself and for it, divided the Anzac Corps, transferring a part of it, for a time, as already noted, to Cape Helles, and leaving the remainder meanwhile to dig in and hold on.

The justice of such conclusions will in due course become evident, not alone from the effort afterwards made to retrieve these errors—made, however, after an interval of months during which, by persistent fortification, the enemy had taken advantage of the misjudgment—but by the enemy's efforts meanwhile to destroy the Anzacs garrisoning the Kaba Tepe lines. The enemy was content merely with holding the attack from Cape Helles, for he had nothing vitally to fear from it; against the Anzacs, now reduced in strength, he, on the other hand, put forth all his energy. The proceeding ought to have opened the eyes of the British Headquarters. Unhappily, it does not appear to have had that effect until two months from this date. The awakening was too late.

Sari Bair is a hilly mass, at its highest point over 900 feet above sea-level, and on all sides its declivities have been scored into deep gullies and ravines. The peculiarity of the spurs which lie between the ravines is

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both their length and their shape. Like the main mass itself, they have been scored by ages of weather with numerous gullies, and both the valleys between the spurs and these *culs-de-sac* on either hand are grown over with scrub and brushwood. Trees are rare. The general aspect of the country here at the present day is that of a rugged moorland. And as at Achi Baba, the formations having the same character, some of the larger spurs are broader at the end than at their juncture with the central knot. In several instances this juncture had been worn to a razor edge.

It was the broad end of one of the larger spurs, that extending to the south-west, on which the Anzacs had established themselves. The right of their position was bounded by a ravine. Their centre, which it will be recalled had been the scene of the earliest Turkish attacks, crossed the spur and crossed also a shorter ravine, that of the Salzi Beit. The left of the position was carried towards Fisherman's Hut along the foot of a spur running to the north-west.

The projections from the main mass of Sari Bair come down in successive levels and at some of these points look as if they had been abruptly broken off. One of these abrupt terminations was that named by the Anzacs Table Top Mountain, both from the flatness of the summit and the perpendicularity of the sides, and though the appearance was an illusion, it looked as if the top in places overhung and the cliffs in descending sloped inwards. Higher generally than the ground occupied by the Anzacs, these abrupt projections were for the Turks admirable observation posts.

After the costly failure of his initial infantry assaults the enemy laid himself out to smother the Australian and New Zealand force with his artillery. Enormous labour must have been involved in dragging his batteries into position up the steep slopes and over the rugged ledges, and it is unfortunate that he was allowed the opportunity of doing it, for with bolder tactics the opportunity might have been denied him. He put in this labour not now so much in the hope of driving the

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Anzacs into the sea as to ensure and support the work of walling them up—the next best thing. On that work his troops were engaged night and day. And in that respect, unfortunately, the transfer of part of the Anzac force to Cape Helles had played into his hands. All the Anzacs could do in the circumstances was to push their line, as they did, close up to that of the enemy, and interrupt his activities as far as possible by bombing, sniping and sap-driving. This went on with scarcely a break both night and day and all along the front. Attack provoked counter-attack, and incursion counter-incursion. Deadly combats occurred at close quarters in half-completed diggings, where man fought with pick and shovel as well as with bomb and bayonet. The initiative of the “warriors from the South” was not to be denied, and the less to be denied since with few exceptions they had by far the best of it. They believed in fighting with the gloves off. The pushing up thus closely to the enemy line hampered, of course, the hostile bombardment.

Looking at the features of the country, the enemy's scheme of walling in was ably planned, and carried out with great perseverance and regardless of losses. On the extreme right, where it rested on the coast just north of Kaba Tepe, the Anzac line consisted of a post fortified and held by the Tasmanian contingent. The line then ran inland along what was called Holly Ridge, from the prickly scrub covering its slopes. On the farther side of the ravine here was another ridge marked by a few stunted pines. This ridge the Turks had promptly seized upon, since behind it was a stream of some value as a water supply. At a point rather less than a mile from the coast Holly Ridge and Pine Ridge joined, both being, as it were, fingers projecting from the southern end of the main spur. At the junction, where the opposing forces were in close contact and both on higher ground, the enemy, working day and night, and week after week, established the Lone Pine defence work, a maze of covered trenches and underground saps. He had a footing on the main spur here,

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and at all costs strove to keep it. Still following the Anzac line north there was at the inland end of the Lone Pine work another steep and narrow *cul-de-sac* ravine. The defences named Johnson's Jolly, and the Anzac position, Courtney's Post, ran along one edge of the depression; opposite was a projecting sub-spur named Mortar Ridge from the trench mortar batteries the enemy located there for the purpose of lobbing bombs across the hollow. At the head of the ravine, and where it was at once narrowest and steepest, was Quinn's Post, called after the gallant Major Quinn who had established it, and remained in command until he met a hero's end. Quinn's Post was in the centre of the Anzac front and at the point where the front was farthest from the coast-line. It was distinctly a post both of danger and of honour, for from here the Anzac front crossed the main spur and was overlooked from a higher part, called, from its shape, Battleship Hill. The enemy fortified the south slope of Battleship Hill with another maze of trenches named by the Australians the Chessboard. Quinn's Post barred the way along the main spur towards the coast. Fortunately, immediately to the left and on the north there was a bold hummock, Russell's Top, from which the ground before Quinn's Post could be swept by artillery and with machine-guns. Beyond Russell's Top the Anzac front, formed of No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 Posts, crossed the ravine of the Salzi Beit and touched the coast again at the outlet of the Chailak Dere. North of Battleship Hill, and divided from it by the Salzi Beit ravine, the enemy held Rhododendron Spur, Table Top Mountain adjoining, Old Number 3 Post (a lower projection from Table Top Mountain facing towards the coast) and, on the farther side of the Chailak ravine, Bauchops Hill.

To sum up, the enemy, though it cost him heavy losses to do it, threw up during May and June eight important besides smaller defensive works, constituting, taken together and as completed, an extensive system. They were the Lone Pine work, the Mortar Ridge fortifications, the Chessboard, the Battleship Hill

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defences, and the works on Rhododendron Spur, Table Top Mountain, Old No. 3 Post (converted into a powerful redoubt) and Bauchops Hill.

Quinn's men had pushed themselves to within a few feet of the Turkish entrenchments, and the Anzac line there ran along the very edge of the precipice with a sheer drop of 200 feet into the ravine below.

Bomb-lobbing not having had the desired effect, it was decided on the night of May 9 to clear the enemy out with the bayonet. First, the hostile trench was swept by a sudden fire in enfilade. Then Quinn's men went over the top. They were eager, and the work was quickly done. The sweep was clean.

This for the enemy was a nasty episode, for he was more anxious to hold up the Anzacs here than at any other point. Accordingly, at dawn (May 10) he pushed forward a heavy counter-attack. A massive column advanced along the main spur supported by a movement up the ravine. Nearing the lost trench line, the descending column had to wheel to left. This manoeuvre exposed it to a raking fire from the Anzacs' guns on Russell's top. Their lost position was recovered, for it was evident that the enemy was prepared to pay any price for its recovery, but the two Turkish regiments forming the column were cut to pieces. Their total loss, according to the diary of a Turkish officer who was in this action, and whose notes were found at a later date, was 2,600 killed and wounded.

The miscellaneous fighting and the enemy's preparations went on after this as before. In a certain sense it was a continuous battle. It demanded on the part of the Anzacs, officers and men alike, a sleepless vigilance. Thus it was while in the fighting line on May 15 that Major-General W. T. Bridges, in command of the Australian Division, received the wound which proved fatal. Like the others he had not spared himself. He was as able as he was devoted.

Such sacrifices, however regrettable, were not in vain. The enemy's wastage in this close quarters fighting was severe—too severe by far for his liking. Another effort

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therefore to crush the Anzacs had been determined upon, and this time it was to be no half and half affair. Whether the British command realised it or not, the enemy was perfectly well aware that if he could crumple up the Anzac force, the British enterprise at Cape Helles would not have the ghost of a chance. It was worth while, therefore, to make a resolute attempt.

From the reports of prisoners, which there was no reason not to accept as reliable, the Turkish force surrounding the position had been increased by the arrival of a further five regiments to 30,000 men, and General Liman von Sanders had himself for this operation taken over the command.

The attack, thus designed to wreck the whole British undertaking, began on May 18 by a sustained bombardment from every Turkish gun and howitzer, directed more particularly against the Anzac support trenches and lines of approach. At midnight the Turkish trenches blazed out in a fierce rifle and machine-gun fusillade. This went on for three hours. Then for a time the firing slackened. At four in the morning, however, there was another outburst, and the enemy troops having presumably by these demonstrations been worked up to the required pitch, a powerful Turkish column was descried in the first faint light of dawn moving against the right-centre, north of Lone Pine. The attack, met at short range, wavered, fell into confusion, and then broke. Another succeeded it. The probabilities appeared to be that the two had been intended to be concurrent, and against adjacent points, and that the timing had gone wrong. But the second column of assault was not allowed to shirk the onset like the first. Though it was beaten back also under the lash of shrapnel, and the storm of well-directed rifle bullets, its German officers rallied it and again it came on. No better fortune. The mass once more scurried to cover. There was a third rally. Brave, no doubt, but not less futile. A fourth rally followed, evidently after the arrival of reserves. The fourth assault withered like the others.

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A further strong attack now developed to the north-east against the fourth section of the Anzac front, near the head of the little valley of the Sazli Beit. This assault proved not more prosperous. In the meanwhile the enemy had become pressing against Quinn's Post, and Courtney's Post adjoining. His attempt was, if possible, to drive in between the two.

Such was the situation when it became full daylight about 5 a.m. With the observation daylight offered the hostile heavy batteries began to lob shells into the Anzac trenches; 12-inch shells and 9·2-inch. Supported by this shelling, the wedge-driving attempt was renewed, and it was kept up during the next five hours. It was defeated finally by the punishing effects of a raking fire poured into its left flank. An hour later the battle was over. After the great effort it had died down.

The Anzac line at all points had held firm, and the enemy's losses in these mass attacks had been the heaviest he had yet sustained. In front of the Anzac trenches his dead lay everywhere. There were three thousand of them at least, and at least twice as many more wounded. By comparison the Anzac losses were surprisingly light—not more than 100 killed and 500 wounded. It seems at first sight an almost incredible disproportion, but it is no new experience to find the losses of a force in battle in inverse ratio to its energy.

Some curious incidents followed upon this crushing reverse. On May 20 the Turks, exhibiting red crescent and white flags, sent out a staff officer to arrange informally and verbally an armistice for the collection of the dead and wounded. Stretcher parties were already out on both sides. Nevertheless, the Turkish trenches were observed to be crowded with men, and the Intelligence Service reported the movement of reinforcements behind the hostile lines.

In these circumstances the Anzac trenches were also manned, and General Birdwood deemed it prudent to notify the Turks that no collection of dead and wounded must take place after nightfall. He added that negotia-

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tions for an armistice must be opened in a regular manner and concluded before noon on the following day.

In the meantime, the Turks had continued to concentrate. Just before darkness fell they opened a general bombardment accompanied by rifle and machine-gun fire. Then on the right of the Anzac front appeared lines of unarmed men holding up their hands. But behind were columns of attack, and it was readily divined both that the pretended armistice proposal had been a device to allow of an uninterrupted massing, and that the pretended surrenders were a ruse to steal forward without losses. The latter device, at any rate, failed to work. The attack had no heart in it. Neither, though both as regards rifle fire and that of machine-guns the night was stormy, had a renewed attempt against Quinn's Post. For the time being evidently the enemy had had enough.

However, on merely sanitary grounds a clearance of the battlefield was desirable. Many of the Turkish dead had been lying about for a week. For that reason a suspension of hostilities was formally arranged for May 24. On this occasion there was no attempt to depart from the terms.

Quinn's Post continued to be the enemy's special aversion, and efforts to take it by assault having proved impracticable, it had been decided to blow it up. Four galleries were driven in from below the Turkish trenches. Three were detected, counter-mined, and destroyed with the men working in them. The fourth, however, was not found out, with the result that in the small hours of May 29 (3.30 a.m.) the centre of Quinn's Post was upheaved by the explosion. Simultaneously a large party of Turkish bombers came over the top of their own position and broke in. The subsections on the right and left had been isolated. But Quinn was not to be cleared out so easily. He led his battalion, the 15th Australians, in a counter-attack with the bayonet. The Post was re-seized and every Turk in it killed or captured. It was in this fight that the heroic Major at last fell.

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Learning of the defeat of his enterprise, the enemy gathered in force, put down a stiff artillery barrage, and launched another assault, headed by a numerous bombing party. The 15th, however, were not to be shaken. They had got their blood up, and, in the vernacular, they gave the enemy "hell." And as before more than once the enfilading fire of the Anzac batteries helped to rip the attacking force to pieces. The shooting was what the Americans call "dead sure." For nearly two hours one hostile attempt followed another. Not one of them could get a footing. And there was again an apparently surprising disproportion in the casualties. On the side of the Anzacs in the whole affair they amounted to no more than 31 killed and 188 wounded. Those on the part of the Turks were increased by their own men. Bombers had been employed to bowl missiles over the heads of the Turkish first line as it came on. But, from nervousness or excitement, the bombers lobbed most into the Turkish first line itself, and did the greater part of the business of blowing it to rags.

Unquestionably the brilliant Anzac victory of May 18-19 had for the time saved the Gallipoli force as a whole, and pointed the way to yet another opportunity; not, indeed, so good an opportunity as that already missed, but one not to be despised. The severity of the Turkish reverse may be judged from one fact, but a fact which is conclusive. No further attempt to oust the Anzacs by an assault in force was made until the end of June.

In face of an event of this kind, the bolder course was to take the ball at the bound. The psychological moment had arrived for a counter-attack. The Anzacs were confident of their prowess, and they had good cause to be.

But to begin with, General Hamilton did not consider his line before Achi Baba too strongly held. His losses there had been heavy, and the risks attending a reverse in so confined a space were the gravest. Again, independently of that, the re-transfer of troops to the Anzac position would take time. There was the question too

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of artillery. Compared with the enemy's the equipment of the Anzacs in guns was light. True, there was the fleet, and the guns of the fleet were, or ought to have been, considered as to all intents part of the artillery equipment of the land force. It is doubtful if that view was taken. Nor is it certain, when the enemy's resources in guns were under review, if the difficulties of moving heavy pieces across a rugged country were fully taken into account. Further, General Hamilton, while in need of reinforcements, was not, though he had demanded them, certain when he would receive them. Finally, he was still, at this time, intent on his original dispositions, and had assigned to the Anzacs a definitely defensive rôle.

Opportunities, however, cannot thus be missed in war with impunity, and it was inevitable that the Expedition should become involved in yet deeper embarrassments.

Nevertheless, fortune seemed bent on proving kind if allowed. On the left of the line before Achi Baba the 29th Division had been strengthened by the 29th Brigade of Indian Infantry. The able officer in command of the Brigade, Major-General H. V. Cox, was quick to see the importance of the position along the bluffs above Y Beach. The position had been in the meantime converted by the enemy into a powerful bastion, and that circumstance ought to have demonstrated its tactical and strategical value. Efforts to capture the bastion by frontal attacks had been disastrous. All the same, Cox believed he saw a way by importing an element of brains into the business, of getting the bastion comparatively cheaply. He submitted his proposals, and was given leave to try.

For this service he selected the 6th Gurkhas. On the night of May 10 scouts belonging to that corps stole silently down to the level of the shore, and picking their way with the stealthiness of cats along the rocks at the bottom of the cliffs, crawled on all fours up the fissures and gullies. The enemy, on the appearance of these silent forms, took alarm, and indulged in a heavy

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outburst of firing. The scouts retired. But they had proved that it was feasible to get in.

Nothing more happened during the next two days. The Turks were left in undisturbed possession, and in the undisturbed confidence of having thoroughly beaten the reconnaissance. But the plans for the attack were being carried out. There was to be a bombardment from seaward by the cruisers *Dublin* and *Talbot*, a bombardment from the land side by the artillery of the 29th Division, and under cover of this latter a feint frontal assault by the Manchesters. But, of course, the real attack was that of the Gurkhas. While the Turks were busy on the land side, and kept off the tops of the bluffs by the naval cannonade, the Gurkhas again stole down to sea level in the darkness, and silently mustered under the bluffs on Y Beach. Then a double company once more crawled up the gullies. Amid the roar of the guns they were not heard. Suddenly they rushed out of their lurking places and charged into the startled enemy with their kukris, the deadly axe-knife they wield with uncanny dexterity. This leading company worked towards the left. Three more double companies, the whole force under the command of Lieut.-Colonel C. G. Bruce, were pushed up, each taking its place on the right of that preceding it. The bastion was cleared, and connected by newly thrown up trenches with the former position of the 29th Brigade. It was a very neat and cleanly cut piece of work.

General Hamilton in his despatch spoke of it as a brilliant little affair. Justly estimated, it was much more.

The General, however, was concerned for the time for the maintenance of his line. Referring to the situation on May 11, he wrote :—

“The moment lent itself to reflection, and during this breathing space I was able to realise we had now nearly reached the limit of what could be attained by mingling initiative with surprise. The enemy was as much in possession of my numbers and dispositions as I was in possession of their first line of defence ; the opposing fortified fronts stretched from sea to Straits ;

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there was little scope left now, either at Achi Baba or at Kaba Tepe for tactics which would fling flesh and blood battalions against lines of unbroken barbed wire. Advances must more and more tend to take the shape of concerted attacks on small sections of the enemy's line after full artillery preparation. Siege warfare was soon bound to supersede manœuvre battles in the open. Consolidation and fortification of our front, selection of machine-gun emplacements, and scientific grouping of our artillery under a centralised control, must ere long form the tactical basis of our plans."

There is hardly a statement in these reflections which is not unhappily disputable. The limit had not been reached for manœuvre battles in the open. As the affair of Gurkha bluffs—they were from this date so called—had shown, there was no need for flinging flesh and blood battalions against unbroken lines of barbed wire. That kind of thing was merely rash, and it was not war. There was, with a naval force which, energetically employed, might have wrecked every defence work the enemy put up, no reason why lines of barbed wire should have remained unbroken, much less have been attacked while in that state.

Not apparently taking that view, General Hamilton set about the disposition of his force for the contemplated siege operations. In order to organise in depth he formed the line into four sections: on the left the 29th Division, with the 29th Indian Brigade; on the left-centre the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division; on the right-centre the Naval Division; on the right the French, now commanded by General Gouraud. A second division of the French Expeditionary Corps, under the command of General Bailloud, had just been landed.

Thus matters drifted on through the month of May and to the beginning of June, the limited space in which the Allied troops before Achi Baba were confined, the steadily growing heat of the summer, the water problem, the supplies and transport problems, and not least, the vermin, all combining to prove how little practicable siege warfare was in such a situation. There were

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sundry advances against "small sections of the enemy's line," but in truth they effected nothing and meant nothing. The sufferings and endurance of the troops, borne with the most patient spirit, were without fruit.

Observing no enterprise in the Kaba Tepe quarter, and freed from anxiety on that account—there can be little question that this was his main anxiety—the enemy harassed the troops before Achi Baba by counter-attacks. They were not successful in taking positions, but it is quite clear that that did not signify. The object was to wear the Allies out.

Since a merely passive attitude was manifestly futile, General Hamilton determined upon a general attack for June 4.

He had under his command, independently of the French, a total of 24,000 bayonets. Of these he proposed to employ 17,000 in the assault, and hold 7,000 as a reserve.

The dispositions of the troops from left to right were those already stated.

The object was to capture the enemy's defences from the Kereves Dere to the *Ægean*.

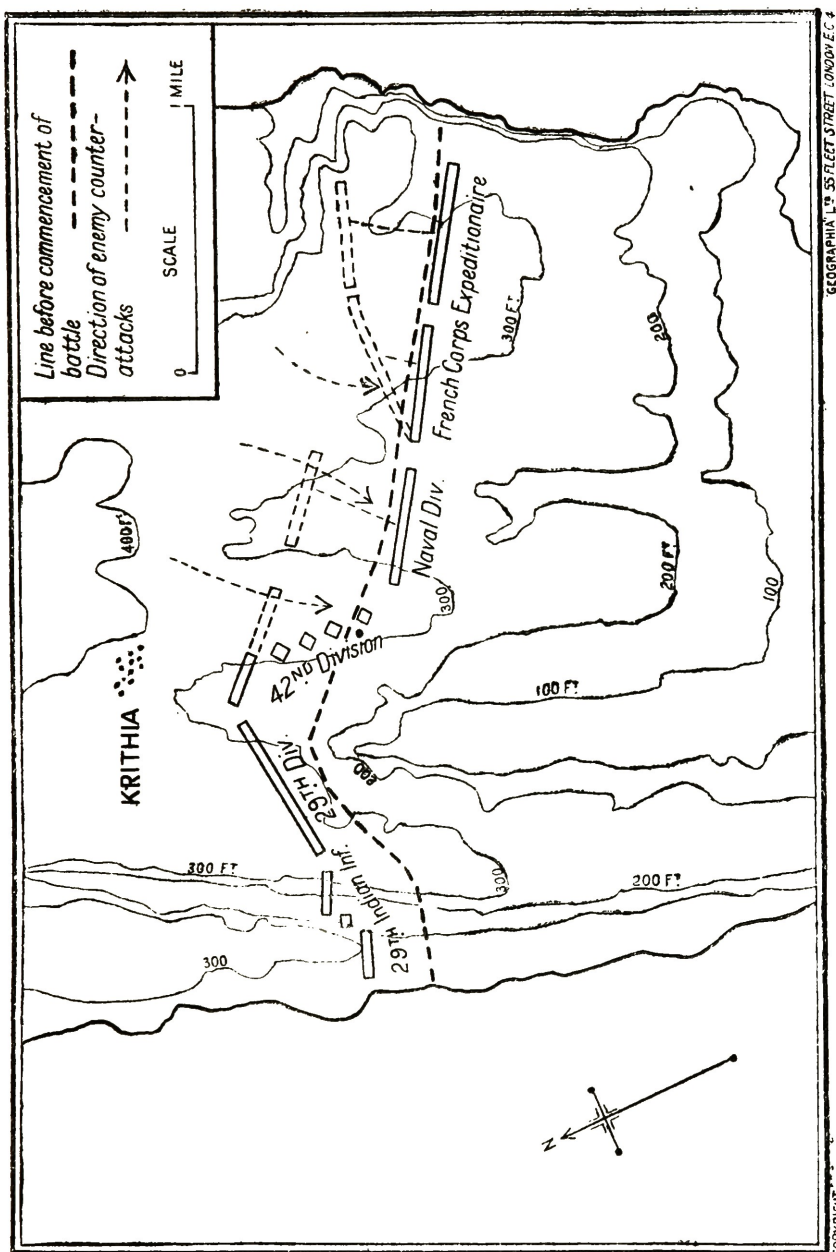
Opening at 8 a.m., the Allied bombardment was kept up for two hours and a half. Then there was an interlude of half an hour, and a renewed cannonade lasting twenty minutes. At the end of that time a feint attack took place to draw the enemy's fire and disclose his machine-gun positions. That done, the Allied batteries re-opened, and pounded these positions and the hostile trenches for another half-hour.

The range was then lengthened, and at noon the Allied infantry from extreme right to extreme left went forward en masse.

The assault had varying fortunes.

On the right the French 2nd Division carried the "Haricot" redoubt, and the 1st Division a line of trenches. The French left was held.

The *Anson* battalion of the Naval Division got a footing in another redoubt, and the Division as a whole seized the Turkish first line of defence works.



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On their left the Manchester Brigade of the 42nd Division having cleared the Turks out of the first line of defences within a few minutes, pushed on and attacked the second line 600 yards farther forward.

The stiffest resistance was offered to the 29th Division on the left. This was plainly in the enemy's estimation, and in fact, the point that mattered.

Nevertheless the 88th Brigade also took the first line of the hostile works.

Of the 29th Indian Brigade, the 14th Sikhs pushed forward despite very heavy losses, but the corps on their left flank was held up by a barbed-wire barricade, which the guns had, it turned out, left intact. Beyond this barricade and nearer the coast, some of the 6th Gurkhas went forward along the tops of the bluffs and seized a redoubt, but like the 14th Sikhs, they found themselves in the air. The Gurkhas had to retire.

Reinforcements were now pushed up towards the left with the intention of renewing the attack in that quarter. This disclosed a fault in the tactics of the battle. Instead of a dead level frontal attack the main pressure should from the first have been applied on the Allied left, and the enemy's defences in that quarter more especially hammered by the fleet. Of course the enemy had sited his trenches as far as possible so that his wire barricade should escape being cut. So much was to be expected.

Observing the movement of reinforcements towards the Allied left the enemy threw the weight of his counter-attack against the Allied right.

The "Haricot" redoubt was lost, and the French, overborne by numbers, compelled to fall back.

In doing so they uncovered the right of the Naval Division. Attacked at once in front and flank that Division had in turn to give way. The enemy there also recovered his lost line, and forced the Division back upon its original position.

The right flank of the 42nd Division was now exposed. It held on tenaciously, but the losses under the cross fire by which it was raked were heavy.

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To meet this situation the right of the Division was "refused," but the situation became more and more difficult.

In the hope of restoring the fortunes of the day a fresh attack by the Naval Division and the French was called for. General Gouraud found, however, that he could not undertake it. His troops, who had fought stubbornly against odds, were too spent.

For six hours the 42nd Division held on, still keeping the footing they had won in the Turkish second line, their right "refused" to the first line. But at half-past six in the afternoon, when it finally was evident the French Corps could not forthwith co-operate further, the order for the 42nd to withdraw was issued. The men received it with rage, notwithstanding that the majority of the officers, including the Brigadier of the Manchesters, had fallen.

So closed this disastrous day. The battle had been a reverse and a costly reverse. It might have been an important victory. In the qualities of the troops there was all the making of success. The belated reinforcement of the 29th Division had achieved nothing.

After this, for a space of three weeks, pending the arrival of a further supply of shell, the operations once more settled down to siege warfare.

On June 21, since the enemy had been strengthening his defences along the Kereves Dere, the French Corps undertook an assault which resulted in the capture of about half a mile of these works, and they were held despite repeated counter-attacks. In this action the Turkish losses were extremely severe. Men were sacrificed in the counter-attacks with extraordinary ruthlessness. At a reasonable estimate the total of these losses could not have been less than 7,000 men. The French losses were 2,500.

During the interval since the battle of June 4, the plan of operations had been under discussion at headquarters. It had become evident that to act upon the like lines again would give no better results. General Hunter-Weston now, therefore, suggested an attack with

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the object of pressing the enemy back on the Allied left and turning his flank resting on the coast. Seeing that the operations were theoretically at all events of an amphibious character, partly naval and partly military, that was both tactically and strategically the hostile weak spot. And it was evident that the enemy was well aware of it, because he had here in the meantime thrown up five lines of trenches, whereas at the other extremity of his front on the Straits, he was content to rely upon two.

Still, though he had as it were been allowed to get in first, the proposal of General Hunter-Weston was agreed to. The attack was fixed for June 28.

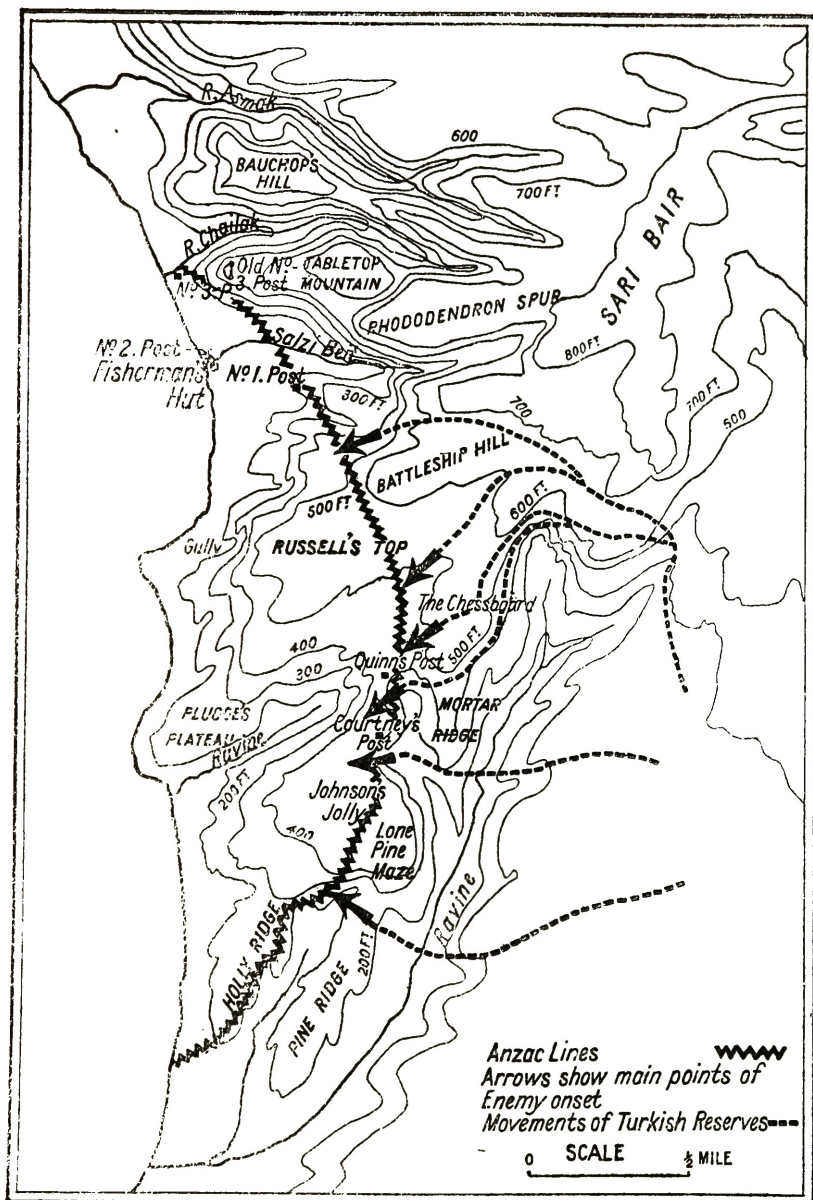
It proved successful. The five lines of trenches abutting upon the coast were carried, as well as a spur running out from the coast ridge beyond them. The British casualties in this action were not more than 1,750 killed and wounded.

Then began on the part of the enemy a series of counter-attacks at this point, renewed day by day and often night by night. The Turkish losses were heavy.

These operations contiguous to the coast were the cause of the renewed enemy attempt against the Anzacs. The Overseas Corps had in the interim been left fulfilling its second-fiddle *rôle*, more troubled with lice than with Turks. Evidently, nevertheless, the enemy, after the action of June 28 before Achi Baba and its outcome, seems to have concluded, and not unnaturally, that dangerous intentions were afoot. His anxieties regarding the Anzacs were revived, and he made another attempt to get rid of them.

This time Enver Pasha came down from Constantinople to see to it that the attempt was not abortive.

The attack was designed as a surprise, and in view of the deadly shooting of the Southern warriors was planned as a night affair. The enemy kept quiet until midnight (June 29). Then all along the line his trenches suddenly burst out into rifle fire, amid which his machine-guns kept up an angry rattle. An hour and a half of that sort of thing, sufficient it was no doubt supposed



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to affect the Anzacs' nerves, and render their shooting less steady, and a strong column came on through the darkness against the part of the front (right-centre) held by the 7th and 8th Australian Light Horse, commanded by Major-General Sir A. J. Godley. Quinn's Post and Courtney's Post were left severely alone. Nothing, however, was gained by the change. The Light Horse, who had been spoiling for the encounter, shot the attacking column to ribbons. Good as he has often proved himself to be behind defences, the Turk was not equal to work of this kind. A second attack against the Anzac left, down the Sulzi Beit ravine, met with no better fate. It may be inferred that Enver Pasha went back to Constantinople disillusioned.

Early in May General Hamilton had come to the conclusion that if the enterprise in Gallipoli was not on its military side to degenerate into a deadlock he would need two more army corps. By the end of June he had received as reinforcements another French division, that of General Bailloud, the 29th Brigade of Indian Infantry, and after an interval of several weeks, the 52nd (Lowland) Division. All were employed on the line before Achi Baba.

His strength was still three brigades below his estimate, and there was the wastage in the meantime to be taken into account, but the arrival of the 52nd Division led him on July 12 to follow up the attack of June 28 by a further effort to oust the enemy from the positions between Krithia and the Kereves valley.

On the Allied left the Turkish front had been pushed back until it was close upon Krithia, but on the Allied right and in the centre, where, in truth, the opportunities were more favourable to the defence, comparatively little progress had been made. The front had tended to slew round and now extended across the peninsula from sea to Straits laterally.

Strategically there was every advantage in turning the enemy's right provided that meanwhile a hostile counter-attack against the Allied right could be held. The danger of such a counter-attack, were it to break

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the Allied front, would be the uncovering of the landing places. Experience, however, had greatly discounted that probability. The enemy's repeated counter-attacks with the object of recovering the positions seized from him along the coast bluffs showed, too, that his concern lay in that direction. And that concern was well justified. There is just beyond Krithia, and between that village and the sea a broad rounded hill, 472 feet in height, the main hummock of the coast bluffs. The Indian troops were already established on its southern spur, and its capture would have outflanked the Achi Baba defences, for between this hill and Achi Baba (709 feet high) lies only a shallow depression. It would have been to the last degree perilous, not to say impossible, for the enemy to have thrown his weight into a counter-attack against the opposite extreme of the Allied line while he was thus exposed to a probably fatal manœuvre. The main hummock of the coast ridge was the key position.

But General Hamilton apparently still thought the defences of Achi Baba might be carried by a frontal assault.

The object of this action, begun on July 12, was to seize the foremost system of the enemy's defences between the Kereves valley and the Krithia road, a distance of 2,000 yards. Manifestly, however, even if successful, nothing decisive could come of it.

The real attack was to be delivered by the French and by the recently arrived 52nd (Lowland) Division. Operations on the Allied left by the 29th Division were intended simply to be a diversion. This was a tactical mistake.

The assault by the French and Scottish troops, delivered after a heavy bombardment, broke through the first two lines of the hostile trenches. The Scottish (155th Brigade), indeed, went right through the enemy defences, and finding no further obstacles in front of them charged forward up the long southern slope of the mountain, the Turks broken and in full retreat. The Scotsmen were arrested not by the enemy, but by

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the barrage of the French guns. The 4th King's Own Borderers, who were leading, dashed right into this hurricane of shrapnel. They were cut to pieces, and had to fall back upon the Turkish second line. The plan of operations had been worked out in detail and to time-table. It had been too much worked out ; it was mechanical, and like the similarly elaborated plan of the landings, allowed nothing for favourable accidents and opportunities.

Naturally, behind and beyond the barrage which had thus proved fatal to brave men, the enemy rallied. The propitious moment had come and gone. Inevitably, too, exposed telephone wires to forward positions had been cut by the Turkish fire. Counter-attacking, the enemy recovered parts of his second line. Allied reserves had to be rushed up. From a brilliant beginning the fighting relapsed into confusion and uncertainty. In the afternoon—the battle had opened early in the forenoon—the 157th Brigade (Lowland Division) were thrown forward according to the original scheme of the assault. They carried the trenches which had been allocated to them to seize, but under heavy machine-gun and rifle fire. There had been an advance of between 200 and 400 yards along the front, taking it as a whole as far as the Krithia road. The aims of the Gallipoli Expedition, however, had not been advanced one inch.

During the night the enemy, having recovered from his initial demoralisation, delivered repeated counter-attacks, and finally at daybreak pushed back part of the 157th Brigade, which had then been fighting without intermission for nearly twenty hours. To restore the situation and clear the Turk out of his recaptured footholds in the second line the Allied assault was on the afternoon of July 13 renewed. It was now supported by the Naval Division. These fresh troops also broke through the hostile front, and the Portsmouth Battalion, charging home, ran into the barrage of the French guns. They were cut up like the Borderers. That a sanguinary blunder of this kind could have taken place two days

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running is surely a condemnation of unintelligent exactitude. Even though asked to take Achi Baba by the method of putting the cart before the horse the infantry were not allowed to do it if the "plans" had to be departed from.

The Allied casualties in this battle were 3,000 men killed and wounded. True the Turkish losses were much heavier, but the battle had no effect upon the fortunes of the Expedition, save to exhaust its resources. There could not have been a more completely Pyrrhic victory.

## CHAPTER X

### GALLIPOLI: THE CHANGE OF PLANS AND THE BATTLE FOR SARI BAIR

Final effort in Gallipoli decided upon—British reinforcements—Change of plan belated—Enemy's increased strength and confidence—Problems of supplies and water—New British dispositions—The weak point of the scheme—Battle before Achi Baba, August 7-9—Birdwood's scheme for the capture of Sari Bair—Its merits—The Anzac "break out"—Capture of the Lone Pine defences—Operations of the Right and Left assaulting columns and advance guards—Brilliant night attacks—Advance up the Sari Bair ravines—The line advanced to below Chanak Bair—Delay in pushing up supports—The landing of the 10th and 11th Divisions at Suvla—Success of the disembarkation—Crisis of the Sari Bair action—A question of reserves—Fatal hesitation—The enemy's bold counter-stroke—Renewed British assault repulsed—Further advance ordered, and the summit gained—and lost—Third attack supported by Baldwin's column—Its late arrival—Advance checked—Enemy's supreme effort of August 10—Baldwin's right turned—His force cut up—Failure of the British plan.

So far the operations in Gallipoli, both naval and military, had been futile, but the British Government had decided upon one more effort before writing off the enterprise, and in June had resolved to send out three additional divisions of Regular troops, and the infantry of two divisions of Territorials. The whole of these reinforcements were to be in the Levant by August 10; the advance guard to reach Mudros a month earlier.

In view of this important accession to his forces, General Hamilton had to make up his mind what to do with it. He records that he considered various alternatives. Among them was a project for throwing all the reinforcements ashore on the southern toe of the peninsula, and fighting a way forward to the Narrows

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by hammering at the Achi Baba defences. This was given up because the space available did not allow of the employment of such a mass. The project, indeed, was impracticable on the face of it. Another idea was to land the reinforcements on the Asiatic side of the Straits. The idea was unsound, and on examination proved to be unsound. Yet another notion was to land at Enos, or Ebrijie, at the head of the Gulf of Saros, and seize the neck of the Gallipoli peninsula at Bulair. It was abandoned because of Naval objections based on the difficulties of landing. The fourth project was to reinforce the Anzacs, and to initiate an offensive from that position, combined with a push on the front before Achi Baba and a landing at Suvla Bay. This fourth project was that determined upon.

Thus finally, and after much groping, the right plan was at the beginning of July perceived. In the interval, however, circumstances had changed. The enemy had taken the measure of the British attack. He knew his own weak and strong points perfectly, and he had been able to fortify himself. More than that, he had been able to an important extent to add to his numbers. The German offensive of 1915 against Russia, at this time in full swing, had freed the Turks not only from the fear of dangerous pressure in the Caucasus and Armenia, but from the apprehension of a Russian descent near Constantinople on the shores of the Black Sea, and the Turkish troops held at Constantinople to guard against that contingency had been set free for operations in Gallipoli. Furthermore, the news of the German advance into Russia had heightened the *moral* and re-established the confidence of the Turkish forces. In Mesopotamia the British had lost Kut ; Syria appeared to be absolutely safe ; there was as yet no stir among the Arabs. At no moment of the War, since its extension to Turkey, was there wider freedom to concentrate the strength of the Empire upon this threatened point at the Dardanelles.

Circumstances had decidedly changed. Opportunities had been lost which it was hardly reasonable to expect

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would again present themselves. The plan at length hit upon was right, but its execution had become vastly more difficult, and its success far more problematical.

The proof of the added difficulty is afforded by the Turkish dispositions. The new enemy troops drafted into Gallipoli were massed not against the Allies at Achi Baba, but against the Anzacs. At the beginning of August the estimated strength of the enemy was 110,000 rifles besides artillery, and the total of all arms and services could hardly have been less than 175,000 men. Of this force two-thirds, comprising 75,000 rifles, were opposed to the Australians. The enemy's defences before Achi Baba enabled him to carry on there with economy of his resources. Nor was he inclined to waste his resources where there was no demand for them. Whether or not he was informed of this fresh British effort, and judging from his measures he apparently was, he at any rate was fully prepared for it, and it is clear had accurately inferred where the blow was to fall.

General Hamilton states that during the month in which the British reinforcements were arriving he had various schemes for hoodwinking the Turks—a landing by 300 men on the northern shore of the Gulf of Saros; a concentration of warships at Mitylene; a demonstration by the French naval squadron along the mainland coast opposite that island; inspections at Mitylene by the Admiral and himself, and other proceedings which he thinks for the most part bore fruit. It is doubtful. The real matters of concern were the dispersal of the enemy's strength from before the Anzac position and the hampering of the enemy's dispositions, not by wasting shell against his defences, but by a sustained naval bombardment of the nodal points of his communications. There were several of these points, and all were well within range of the naval guns—Karnabili, Kum Keui, Boghali, the road junction at the head of Kilia Leman Bay in the Narrows, Maidos, Eski Keui, and the road junction at the head of the Asmak valley. To have

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made these points impassable and kept them impassable would have tied the Turkish defence into knots. Yet the movement of the enemy's troops, guns, munitions and other supplies does not seem to have been seriously impeded.

There was all the more necessity for leaving nothing to chance if that could be avoided, because the British strength, even with the full reinforcements, did not exceed 95,000 rifles, and, fortified as the Turks now were, this force, inferior in numbers, was in truth being asked to undertake an exceptional feat of arms. The backbone of the whole enterprise was undoubtedly the Allied fleet, as it had been from the beginning, and it was not that the sailors did not do the work assigned to them with thoroughness and skill. They did. But the real support needed was more than that given in the actual land fighting.

The British Headquarters were more concerned meanwhile with working out the plans of the proposed attack. Many of the problems of detail were far from easy. There was no base commodious enough to accommodate five more divisions, even less the artillery of two. The reinforcements had to be distributed between the islands of Mudros, Imbros, and Mitylene. They had to be put ashore at Anzac and at Suvla Bay with their material, munitions and stores. They had adequately to be supplied with water, for it was now the hottest period of the summer, and in the ravines and gullies of Gallipoli the temperature was tropical. An additional 1,750 water carts and 3,700 mules had to be provided and landed. To grapple with the water problem the measures taken were first the construction within the Anzac lines of a reservoir to hold 30,000 gallons, fitted with pumps, and connected with a system of distribution pipes and tanks; and next the collection from Egypt, India and elsewhere of camel tanks, pakhals (water skins), petrol tins, and milk cans, to hold 100,000 gallons more. A cargo of these was lost owing to the steamer on which they had been shipped coming into collision with another vessel, but enough were got together to

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hold 80,000 gallons. However looked at, the undertaking as a whole was a gigantic business. It would have been a big affair had the landing places been adequate. The landing places were of necessity inadequate, improvised and under hostile fire, and the disembarkation of every separate unit of the force had to be schemed out as an operation by itself. There is no doubt this detailed part of the work was well done.

By the transfer to and landing at Anzac of the 10th Division, part of the 13th and the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, the force under the command of General Birdwood had been increased to 37,000 infantry and 72 guns. The supporting naval force consisted of two cruisers, four monitors, and two destroyers. It was inadequate. The landing of the reinforcements at Anzac took place on the nights of August 4, 5 and 6, and in the quietest hours.

The attack before Achi Baba (a diversion), the attack from Anzac, and the landing of the 9th Army Corps at Suvla, were all timed in the programme to take place on August 6. They were to be, to all intents, simultaneous. As regards the landing at Suvla, this was a mistake. To have embarrassed the enemy's dispositions and to have thinned him out before Sari Bair, the landing at Suvla should have taken place at least a day earlier.

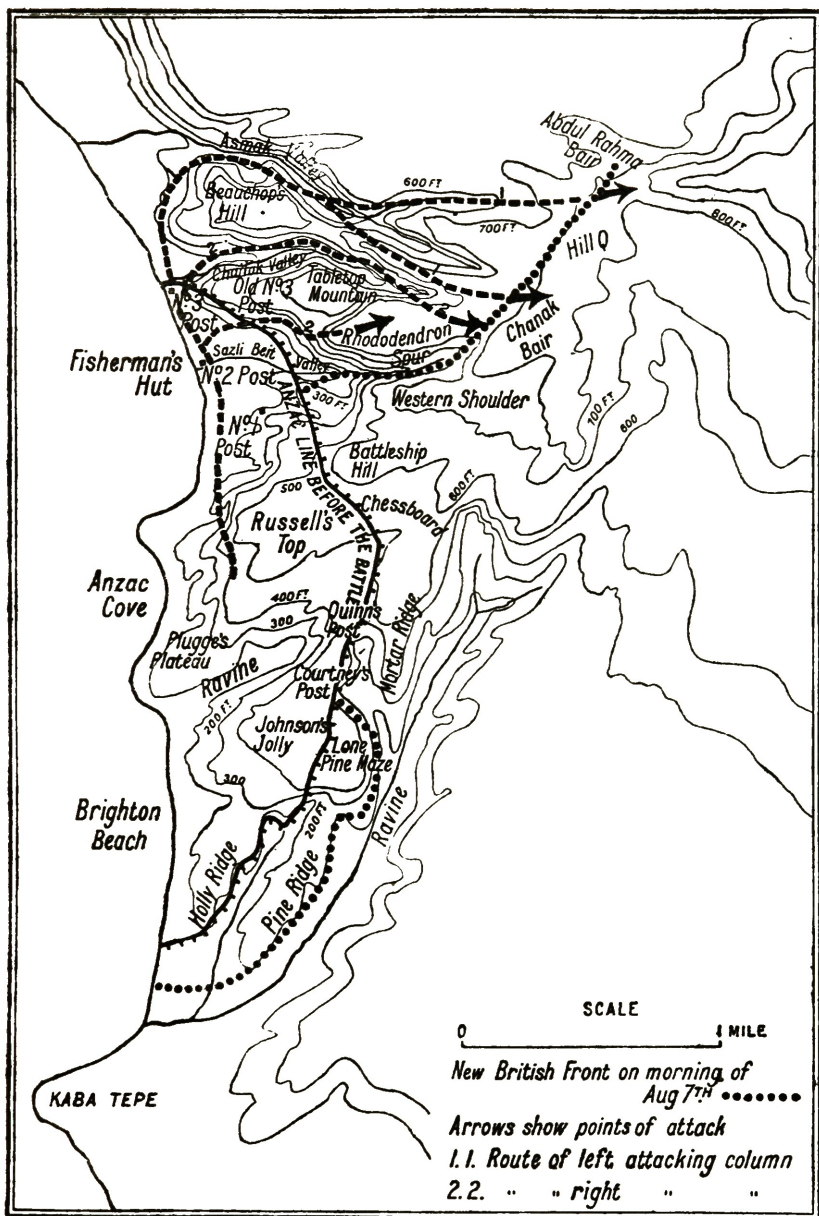
For these operations the British dispositions marked out were: Before Achi Baba 23,000 British and 17,000 French infantry; at Anzac 37,000 infantry; at Suvla 30,000 infantry. Of course means of transport and difficulties of landing largely controlled this distribution, but since the force at Anzac was intended to deliver what General Hamilton described as "the knock-out blow," it was evidently not very strong for the purpose. Taking the Anzac and Suvla forces together as 67,000 rifles, there was a chance, but if anything went wrong with the Suvla operations, then General Birdwood would be left to face a hostile superiority of something like two to one. Since, too, the plans had been changed and the line before Achi Baba had become the Allied flanking

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movement, the activity of the very considerable force there, 40,000 rifles in all, should have been more than a diversion. Now was the time to press the Achi Baba attack on sound strategical lines with all the vigour possible. A merely spasmodic assault at Achi Baba was a weak spot in the British scheme. It was clear that the enemy's primary object was to crush the Anzac offensive, and that the success or failure of that offensive must to no small extent depend upon preventing him by pressure elsewhere from giving effect to his design. The Allied force before Achi Baba was the main means of prevention, the force landed at Suvla only secondary. And this bad spot in the British scheme was the main cause of its failure. The enemy wisely had his greatest weight at the point of attack; the British commander his greatest effective weight elsewhere, and during part of the time passive. It was an attempt to snatch victory with one hand.

The operations on the front before Achi Baba need only be briefly dealt with. The assault of August 6 was directed against some 1,200 yards of hostile trenches on the British right and right-centre—the wrong point again. It was delivered at daybreak (3.50 a.m.) and by part of the 29th Division and the 42nd Division. The enemy was encountered in superior force. Despite its signal bravery the assault failed.

On the following morning (August 7) the Turks counter-attacked, but on their side also achieved no success. The same afternoon the British offensive was resumed, this time in the centre of the line against Turkish defences between the Mallepe Dere and the Kanli Dere. The hottest of the fighting was in and around a vineyard just west of the Krithia road. The East Lancashires had captured this position in the first rush, and held on to it notwithstanding counter-attacks which followed one another at brief intervals. Up and down the enclosure over a length of not more than 600 feet the struggle swayed. One Turkish column after another came on, pressed back the East Lancashire men by weight of numbers, melted away, and



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were chased out. The ranks of the Fusiliers, too, were thinned, and the enemy, determined to oust them, threw forward a column double the depth of those so far thrown forward. But that also was wrecked. Through the night the vineyard remained in the hands of these dauntless British troops. On the morning of August 8 the enemy came on once more. Once more he was beaten. He tried again at night, and he failed again. It was a desperate encounter, bayonet against bayonet, and the Turk went down. On August 9, after forty-eight hours' fighting, the East Lancashires were relieved. The position remained part of the British line.

These comparatively limited attacks upon the front before Achi Baba had kept the enemy there occupied, but it would be going far to say that they materially affected his dispositions. It is clear that they did not.

In the offensive from the Anzac position the troops under the command of General Birdwood were to carry the Turks' confining defences, and to storm the ridges and summit of Sari Bair. That was a large order in the face of a numerically much stronger opposing force, even had the pressures on the Achi Baba front on the one hand and from Suvla Bay on the other been fully applied.

The details of this offensive were left to General Birdwood, and considering the force at his disposal, and the nature of the country to be covered, his tactics were sound and able.

Part of the force—the Australian Division with the 1st and 3rd Light Horse Brigades, and two battalions of the 40th Brigade—were to hold the Anzac position and occupy the enemy with attacks launched from it, more especially on the Anzac right.

The New Zealand and Australian Division, less the two Light Horse Brigades just mentioned; part of the 13th Division; and the 29th Brigade of Indian Infantry were to move out upon Sari Bair, with the highest ridge of the massif, that of the Chanuk Bair, as their objective.

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The 29th British Brigade (less one battalion) and the 38th Brigade were held in reserve.

The general plan by which the operations of the first two parts of the force were to dovetail together was this. The attacks from the Anzac position were to be made on the right and centre drawing the strength of the enemy as far as possible in that direction, that is, to the south of the main Sari Bair massif. The missile troops coincidentally were to move out from the position to the north, and turning inland strike up the ravines leading to the summit from the west and north-west. This gave them the prospect of getting on the enemy's right flank. The attack up the ravines was to be made by night.

Obviously the offensive opened with an assault on the Lone Pine defences. That work had been heavily wired in, and the Turkish trenches were roofed with strong beams of pine, proof against any save the heaviest shells. They formed a maze at once intricate and dark, and they were connected up by blind saps with other defences north, east and south.

This attack, schemed out in detail by Major-General Walker, commandant of the 1st Australian Division, and carried out by the 1st Australian Brigade (Brigadier-General N. M. Smyth) was in the circumstances a remarkable success. To reach the enemy works at all it was necessary for the Australians to race across the open exposed to fire not only in front but on both flanks. The barbed-wire entanglement had to be negotiated, and then it became a question of getting in and there was no way in save by demolishing the head cover. Very few troops have ever had to face such an attempt. Not merely, however, did these Australians refuse to waver under the converging fire poured in upon them, and not only did they steeplechase over the entanglement, but, though the hostile loopholes were spitting fire right and left, the spectacle was witnessed of bodies of men as with one impulse seizing and lifting the heavy beams and crashing them into the trenches beneath. A shower of bombs hurled through the openings thus

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made, and the assailants were in with the bayonet. It was all a matter of minutes at the outside. In a quarter of an hour after they had gone over their own top, the 3rd and 4th Battalions of the Brigade were down amid the labyrinth Turk hunting. The 2nd Battalion caught the Turks as they bolted from the burrows. The work upon which the enemy had put in weeks of labour fell at the first blow.

Of course, such a defeat was not to be accepted passively, for, in fact, it broke the Turks' left front. The Australians had not been at the work of organising the captured maze more than half an hour when there began the first of a series of reactions which were kept up during the next six days, with interludes of bombing and sniping in between. In resisting these assaults, some of them delivered with an almost frenzied determination, the Australians showed a valour not less unbeatable than that of their first onset. They were pitted against an apparently overwhelming weight of numbers, a mere Brigade, mustering 2,000 rifles to start with, against some 25,000 of the enemy, and an enemy utterly reckless as to his losses. But nothing could shift them, though every Turkish-German battery within range was focussed upon the position. Day and night these Australians stuck it. Their losses were heavy—inevitably; the fatigue they endured seemed beyond human powers; but their fire was as rapid, straight and deadly at the end of the week as at its beginning, and they were not less terrible at close quarters. The Turk was never able to retake Lone Pine.

There can be no doubt that this Australian attack at Lone Pine, the outcome of which must have been a startling surprise, had all the effect in diverting the enemy's weight it was intended to have, and there can be no doubt it contributed most materially to ease the first stages of the operations against Chanuk Bair. Other holding attacks delivered against German works opposite to Russell's Top served the like purpose. It was mainly owing to these and the enemy's doubt as to whether there was to be a break out on the Australian

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left or on the right, that the missile force got through with comparatively little opposition.

That force had been disposed in two columns, of assault, each preceded by a covering column or advance guard. The command was entrusted to Major-General Sir A. J. Godley.

The Right Assaulting Column was to move up towards Chanuk Bair by the Salzi Beit and Chailak ravines ; the Left Assaulting Column to move up by the Aghyl ravine. The Salzi Beit runs south-west from the summit ; the Chailak west ; the Aghyl north-west. The whole movement was a converging one.

But to render it feasible the Turkish defences of Old No. 3 Post, and on Table Top Mountain, lying between the Salzi Beit and Chailak ravines, had first to be seized. That was the work assigned to the Right Covering Column. In carrying out this duty the Right Covering Column would, while opening up the two ravines, protect the flank of the Left Covering Column as it moved further north along the coast, in order to seize on the farther side of the Aghyl ravine the Damajelik Bair and by doing so bar the enemy's access to the Aghyl Dere from the direction of Suvla.

The Right Covering Column, which first got to work, consisted of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade ; the Otago Mounted Rifles ; the Maori Contingent ; and the New Zealand Field Troop ; Brigadier-General A. H. Russell, sponsor of Russell's Top, in command.

Old No. 3 Post might, clumsily handled, have proved a very ticklish bit, but Brigadier Russell did not intend to handle it clumsily. On the contrary he finished it off within ten minutes. The story of the ruse is well known, but will stand re-telling.

Until May 30 this seaward facing spur had been in the hands of the Anzacs. It was an important point tactically, because it commanded the entrances to the ravines on either side, and to a certain extent the beach in front, a quarter mile distant. Having captured it the enemy set out in his usual fashion to render it "impregnable." He converted it into a redoubt,

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protected overhead by a covering of heavy beams, and in front on the south slope by two lines of fire trenches, strong entanglements, and various outworks, the whole as pretty a bit of German military engineering as could be wished for.

On successive nights, by arrangement, the cruiser *Colne*, focussing her searchlight on the redoubt, had pumped shell on to it for ten minutes; then for ten minutes had shut off. Next, for ten minutes more there had been a second turn of searchlight and bombardment. Care was taken that this performance should begin every evening at nine precisely, and end precisely at half-past. It was surmised that during that half-hour the Turks in the redoubt would have the good sense to clear out.

On the night of the attack by the Right Covering Column (August 6) the performance by *Colne* broke out as customary, and on time. While it was in progress the New Zealanders had moved forward and, unheard amid the boom of the cruiser's guns, had scrambled through the scrub on to the spur behind the work. The shelling over they rushed in. It was as expected. The redoubt was empty.

The garrison had betaken themselves through the saps to the outworks, and it is not hard to imagine their astonishment to find the New Zealanders coming after them the same way. Thus attacked from its keypoint the position was indefensible.

Old No. 3 Post taken, the Covering Column divided. Part struck across the Chailak ravine to Bauchops Hill half a mile to the north, and brought off another surprise. They cleared out an extensive maze of trenches, held by a much more numerous force. But terror and darkness multiplied the portent. The other detachment pushing along the spur from the redoubt scaled the declivities of Table Top Mountain. The feat was considered an impossibility, and the Turks holding the small circular plateau forming the top must have been hardly less astonished than their fellows in Old No. 3 Post. They put up a stiff fight but it was brief. Some 150, finding

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themselves surrounded, laid down their arms. Table Top was an enemy depot, a kind of upper shelf reckoned exceptionally safe. The haul of rifles, ammunition, equipment and stores was encouraging.

Russell had handled his troops with skill and daring, relying upon their initiative and resourcefulness. And those qualities were not least conspicuously displayed in an ugly bit of work presented by an entanglement obstructing the bed of the Chailak. The Otago Mounted Rifles were held up by this heavy and broad fencing, which the enemy posted to guard it were evidently ready to defend to the last. But the Maoris, helped by a party of New Zealand Engineers, were not long in finding a way round. The work of the Right Covering Column had now been done, well done, and with light losses.

The Left Covering Column, under the command of Brigadier Travers, was not less successful. It consisted of two battalions—the 4th South Wales Borderers and the 5th Wiltshires, with half the 72nd Field Company. To reach its objective, the Damajelik Bair, it had to execute a march of rather more than three miles over rugged country, and of course in the darkness. The prompt capture by Russell's force of Old No. 3 Post, however, cleared the way across the Chailak valley. On the farther side, passing between westward slope of Bauchop's Hill and the coast, the column came under the enemy's fire from the higher ground, but this occupation with the Left Covering Column had contributed to the successful surprise assault by Russell's men. Across the Aghyl the Left Column was deployed and launched against the Turkish trenches on Damajelik Bair with the bayonet. One line of defences was cleared after another in dashing style. This fighting went on coincidentally with that on Bauchop's Hill on the other side of the ravine, and the two positions were finally cleared very nearly at the same time—a little after one in the morning.

An hour earlier the Right Assaulting Column had entered the Salzi Beit and Chailak ravines, its immediate

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objective the capture of Rhododendron Spur. That protrusion linked Table Top Mountain with the part of the central summit known as Chanuk Bair, and its seizure meant access to the main ridge.

The Column—Brigadier-General F. E. Johnson in command—was formed of the New Zealand Infantry Brigade, a Company of the New Zealand Engineers, and an Indian Mountain Battery.

The main attack upon Rhododendron Spur was to be delivered from the Chailak slope—the Spur rose between the two ravines—supported by a diversion along the Salzi Beit by the Canterbury Infantry Battalion. That corps, passing under Table Top Mountain, reached the lower slopes of the Spur, on the Salzi Beit side, by half-past one, but by this time the enemy, alarmed, and rightly alarmed, by the rapid loss of four of his fortified positions, had pretty plainly satisfied himself that the real danger lay in this quarter. He was already, therefore, reinforcing in all haste at the head of both valleys.

The resistance encountered by the Canterbury Battalion was stiff, and they were not strong enough alone to carry the Turkish entrenchments. Nor was it, in fact, intended that they should operate alone. In the Chailak ravine, meanwhile, the main body, pioneered by the Otago Battalion, found the going difficult. The ravine was thickly overgrown with scrub; the bed of the river obstructed by pitfalls; the Turks in force. But the Turks were less an obstacle than the brushwood. It was a quarter to six in the morning before the force, pushing as far as the Rhododendron Spur, was able to move up it in touch with the Canterbury men.

The Left Assaulting Column, however, represented the real weight of the attack. The command, entrusted to Major-General H. V. Cox, who had proved his merits in the affair of the Gurkha bluffs, was formed of two brigades—the 29th Indian Infantry and the 4th Australian—and like the Right Column, was accompanied by an Indian Mountain Battery and a Company of New Zealand Engineers.

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The orders of this force were to move up to and seize the main ridge by way of the Aghyl ravine.

It entered the ravine immediately after its advance guard, the Left Covering Column, and moving up took the enemy completely by surprise. The Turks ran, throwing away their arms in their flight.

Half-way up the Aghyl valley forks. One branch, that to the right, led up to the part of the central ridge known as Hill Q; the other, to the left, to the part of the ridge known as Hill 305, from its height in metres. This last is the loftiest point. Hill Q and Hill 305 are connected by a col.

The Indian Brigade struck along the ravine to the right; the Australian along the ravine to the left. In these higher ravines the resistance stiffened. At day-break, however, the Australians had reached the head of the left-hand ravine, and the slope leading immediately to the summit (Hill 305); the Indian troops the head of the right-hand ravine and the slope just below Chanuk Bair, where there was a small upland farm. In that they had established themselves. On their right the 10th Gurkhas were in touch with Johnson's Force, who had entrenched on Rhododendron Spur, where it joined on to the central mass; on their left the 14th Sikhs were in touch with the Australians. The line was thus continuous.

In truth, considering the strength of the two columns, three brigades in all, these operations had been attended with remarkable success, and the more so seeing that the advance had been carried out by night through unknown country. It seems, however, to have been expected that they would have reached and seized the summits of the central ridge before daylight. In view of the fact that there had been no previous reconnaissance of the ground, this expectation was high, if not too high. The troops had done extremely well. What was necessary now was at all speed to push up reinforcements. Beyond doubt more than three brigades could not usefully be employed on the tops of the main ridge, not more than a mile and a quarter in length.

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But the *gaining* of the ridge and the holding of it against a counter-attack was a question of supporting strength at once available.

These were not the only events of this night (August 6). On the extreme left the 9th Army Corps had landed at Suvla. The landing had been timed to coincide with the attack on Sari Bair, not only as part of that operation, but in the belief that the coincidence would take the enemy by surprise, and that there would in consequence be at Suvla but little opposition. There was little opposition.

It is advisable here to follow events in the order of time rather than in that of place, because the fighting in fact extended from the Lone Pine work on the south to the positions round Suvla Bay on the north.

At this time the Turks were reported to have north of Sari Bair no more than a comparatively feeble force, estimated by the Intelligence Service at 4,000 men. Nor were their defences there very complete. On the seaward side of the Salt Lake, and between that sheet of water—at this date as usual a mere marsh—and the *Ægean* there is an isolated hill, Lala Baba, 49 metres high. The hill had been enringed with trenches. North of the lake is a stretch of sandhills. Some trenches had also been cut there. On the inland side of the lake is the rise named by the Australians Chocolate Hill (53 metres), and adjacent to it, running inland, Green Hill (50 metres), Scimitar Hill (70 metres), and Ismail Oglu Hill (100 metres). The enemy had established some batteries on Chocolate Hill and on Ismail Oglu Hill. Seemingly these various defences taken together were judged sufficient both to prevent a landing in the bay and to resist an attempt on the part of the Anzacs to break out on the north.

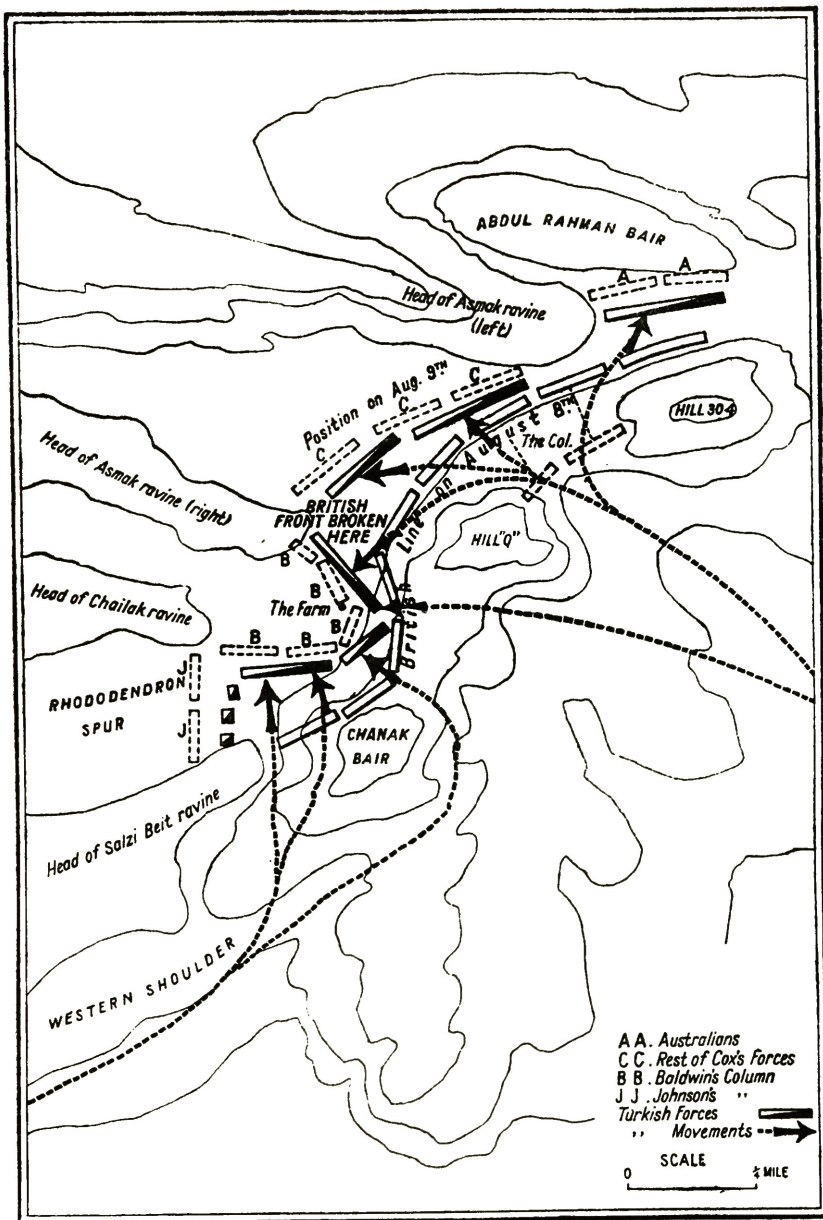
The 9th Army Corps had been formed of the 10th (Irish) Division and the 11th (Northern) Division. The Corps was under the command of Lieut.-General Sir F. Stopford. He was a soldier of experience and had served under Wolseley in Egypt and with Buller in South Africa.

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For the purposes of this disembarkation the troops had been assembled at Imbros, the nearest island base, and, put on board destroyers and motor-lighters, were at nightfall (August 6) to leave Kephalos Bay, the anchorage at Imbros, and reach Nibrunesi Point by ten p.m. It will be recalled that the attack upon the Lone Pine maze had begun at six that evening, and that at ten the two covering columns of the assault upon Sari Bair were to break out.

The passage from Imbros and the landing were favoured by calm weather, and the operation of throwing the troops ashore greatly aided by the motor-lighters, now used for the first time. Each carried 500 men besides munitions and stores. As they were of light draft they could stand close in, and moving under their own steam at a speed of five knots, could rapidly transfer men from the destroyers, which owing to their deeper draft had to lie farther off the land.

The operation of the landing, carefully worked out by the Staff, went well save for one mischance. Originally it had been intended to land all the troops on the sandy beach outside of and just south of the bay. This beach, about a mile in length, is backed by sandhills. It proved to be undefended, and the actual operation of landing at night was not visible from the enemy's posts. Possibly enough had the whole of the force been landed here the entire proceeding would have turned out a complete surprise. But, considering that, on the probabilities, there would be opposition, General Stopford urged the advisability of throwing one brigade, the 34th, ashore inside the bay on its north side in order to secure command of the inlet. To that proposal General Hamilton, assented. It turned out, however, not merely that the water inside the bay was shallow, making it difficult to stand inshore, but that the enemy here proved to be on the alert, with the result that he was given the alarm from the outset. The motor-lighters grounded some distance off the beach, and men had to wade ashore through water up to their necks and armpits. They were not only encumbered with their



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accoutrement, but under fire both from the Turkish trenches among the sandhills in front and from the Lala Baba post behind.

Happily the 32nd and 33rd Brigades had got ashore outside the bay beyond Nibrunesi Point without mishap. The first proceeding was an assault on Lala Baba. While the Turks there were occupied with the landing going on across the bay they found themselves attacked from the rear by two battalions of the 32nd Brigade—the 9th West Yorkshires and the 6th Yorks. As a Turkish post Lala Baba was once for all snuffed out.

By the seizure of the Turkish defences on each side of its entrance, command of Suvla Bay had now been secured. The only point adjacent to the bay which the enemy still held was a low rise named Hill 10, just north of the Salt Lake. Against that point the first operations were directed. In opposition to the opening attack upon him by the troops of the 34th Brigade the Turk showed some disposition to rally. The scrub and gorse, dry as tinder after the heats of the summer months, was set on fire. Despite these fires the 9th Lancashire Fusiliers, and the 11th Manchesters drove the Turks off Hill 10 with the bayonet. Another part of the Brigade was pushed forward to seize the coast ridge, the Karakol Dag, with the intention of preventing the enemy from shelling the bay from those heights.

Owing to these clearances, which had been effected by daybreak, six battalions of the 10th Division, arriving at daybreak (August 7) from Mitylene under the command of Major-General Hill, sailed in the bay.

It has been supposed that the actual operation of the landing at Suvla was confused and costly. On the contrary, it was the most successful operation of its kind up to this time carried out. In casualties its cost had been comparatively trifling. No body of troops as numerous had been thrown ashore in so brief an interval.

Thus affairs stood on the morning of August 7. We will return to the story of the assault upon Sari Bair.

In the words of General Birdwood and in fact the two

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assaulting columns and the two covering columns engaged in that operation had "performed a feat of arms without parallel." They had swept away the strong and elaborated defences of the enemy on the northern face of the Anzac line; they had in the night covered miles of wild and rugged country; they had climbed to a height of nearly 1,000 feet above sea level; they had encountered and had overcome dogged opposition. After seven hours of that exertion, and weighted with their equipment, they were inevitably tired. But the exertion, severe as it was, proved less trying than the lack of water. The force had to be limited to a pint per man per day—a pint in twenty-four hours in face of work like that, in a barren land, and amid the heats of August in the Levant. Is it surprising that on the appearance of the pack mules bearing the priceless fluid, men, reduced to that state in which thirst becomes a physical agony, rushed out to lick with their parching tongues the moisture exuding through the waterskins?

So far as they had gone the operations had evidently astonished the enemy, and it is easy to imagine that between the loss of his walling-in defences and the landing of more British forces at Suvla he realised that the crisis of the battle had now been reached. The issue at this moment—the dawn of August 7—trembled in the balance. The quality of the British troops and excellent tactics had prevailed, and victory might still have been snatched. In the circumstances, the Commander-in-Chief on each side had to take a decision. "At times," General Hamilton records in his despatch, "I had thought of throwing my reserves into this stubborn central battle, where probably they would have turned the scale. But each time the water troubles made me give up the idea." Water troubles or not it is clear that the General should have risked it. In place of throwing forward his reserves he relied upon the diverting pressure from Suvla. He hesitated. He hesitated for nearly two days—and he lost.

On the other side the enemy Commander-in-Chief had to decide whether or not he would occupy himself

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with the Suvla diversion, or, chancing that for the time, swing his weight against the British centre. Skilfully and with the boldness which in war is often the truest prudence, he risked the Suvla attack, and doubtless also shrewdly inferring the condition of the assaulting columns on Sari Bair, made up his mind there and then that there and then fortune lay. He decided soundly—and won.

So far General Birdwood's tactics had yielded brilliant results. But because faulty strategy may offset the most admirable tactics—it had so proved already in the fighting before Achi Baba—matters from this time began to go wrong.

The first mistake was an order to the troops on Sari Bair to renew the attempt to seize the actual summit of the main ridge. Tired as they were, racked by thirst, and worst of all unsupported, it was inevitable that this attempt could not, in face of the enemy's increasing strength, prevail. The Turks' chief access to the summit of the main ridge was up its western shoulder from Battleship Hill. The guns of the cruisers and monitors were turned on to this access, but though they must have hampered, they did not arrest the hostile movement. There were not enough of them. The fresh assault was initiated on the left by the 4th Australian Brigade; less half a battalion left to hold their position at the foot of the slope, but reinforced by the 14th Sikhs. The attack made no headway, and while thinning the strength of the force, added to its fatigue; more haste was the less speed.

Two hours and a half later (at 9.30 a.m.) a general assault was ordered. It also met with a repulse. To enable the assaulting columns to hold on three battalions were at 11 a.m. sent up from reserve. They were part of the 39th Infantry Brigade. But as it was palpable that this comparatively slender support might not prove enough it was decided, if need arose, to draw upon Russell's force. The Right Covering Column had remained holding the captured positions—Old Number 3 Post, Table Top Mountain, and Bauchop's Hill.

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Russell was ordered to hold these with two regiments of Mounted Rifles, so that the remainder of his force, two battalions, plus the Maoris, might be ready to move.

Meanwhile the troops under the crests of Sari Bair held on. But the same afternoon, on the arrival of the supports, they were re-grouped into two columns for a further advance. To Johnson's force were added the Auckland Mounted Rifles, two battalions of the 13th Division, and the Maoris. To Cox's force the 39th Infantry Brigade (less one battalion) but with the 6th South Lancashires attached.

The renewed attack was timed for 4.15 a.m., August 8. When the time came the men of the several battalions on the right, now rested, raced each other up the slope. The corps were the Wellington (N.Z.) Battalion; the 7th Gloucesters; the Auckland Mounted Rifles; the 8th Welsh Pioneers, and the Maoris. The rush was led by Lieut.-Colonel W. G. Malone, and no fire on the part of the enemy could stop it. The crest of Chanuk Bair was gained. From observation posts in the rear figures were seen through the glasses and in the first light of the breaking day made out on the skyline. They were British.

To the left of Johnson's force the 39th Infantry Brigade and the 29th Indian Brigade moved up at the same time, part against Hill Q, part against the col. Some footing was gained on the spurs, but the enemy's fire here checked a further advance.

The 4th Australian Brigade unfortunately also met with a check. It had been judged advisable to reach the apex of Hill 305 by and from a spur on its northern side called the Abdul Rahman Bair. The Turks at this point, however, were in strong force and well supplied with machine-guns. Since the southern slopes of Sari Bair are precipitous—the axis or backbone of the mass runs east to west—the enemy knew that if hemmed in at both ends he was entrapped. The eastern end, Hill 305, was his avenue of escape, just as the western end was his main avenue of reinforcement. On hill 305, therefore, he was carefully entrenched, and he had

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a superior strength ready for a counter-attack. In the assault the Australians lost heavily. More than 1,000 of these dauntless warriors were killed and wounded. It was a struggle that appeared to reach the very limits of desperation. Finally, numbers told, and the Brigade had to retire to its former line at the head of the Asma ravine. Encouraged by this success, for though it had been extravagantly bought it was something to force these terrible fellows to retire at all, the enemy launched a succession of massed counter-attacks. He plainly meant to finish with these Australians while the apparent chance offered. But it was now the Australians' turn. Massed column after massed column of Turks was smashed. The men of the Brigade shot until their rifles grew too hot to touch; the bottom and sides of the ravine became choked with Turkish wounded and dead. The defenders of the position could not be shifted one inch.

At the other end of the main ridge in the meantime Johnson's force had been struggling to maintain its footing. Chanuk Bair was subjected to a deadly hostile concentrated fire. The surface was covered with but the thinnest sprinkling of soil, and to dig trenches affording any real cover was difficult. The Gloucesters, who were supporting the Wellington Battalion, were never able to dig deeper than six inches. They found themselves exposed to a gruelling hail of shells and bullets. Yet they held on, though every officer of the corps, including the sergeants, had been either killed or wounded. Seemingly without leadership and broken into groups, the command was spontaneously taken over by corporals or lance-corporals, or, by common consent, by privates, and in face of counter-attacks they still carried on. The gallant Malone had fallen while in the act of mapping out the line to be held. Others had gone, yet all through that afternoon no efforts of the enemy, and he made many, could drive the line back. The orders were to stop there, and stop there the line did.

During the afternoon and towards sunset the battle slackened. The enemy, heavily trounced, was showing

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signs of wear. Hence the decision again to renew the British assault at midnight. For this assault the ground gained on Chanuk Bair was to be used as a pivot, for swinging the rest of the line forward on to the ridge. And to assist that operation the forces already so far engaged were to be further supported by a third column consisting of five battalions—two from the 38th Brigade; two from the 29th Brigade; and one from the 40th Brigade. The command of this column was given to Brigadier-General A. H. Baldwin, of the 38th Brigade.

Baldwin's column had been assembled in the Chailak ravine, and was to move up that defile and deliver the main attack in the form of an assault on Hill Q. The forces of Johnson and Cox were to co-operate on its right and left respectively.

It was a good scheme, but unhappily, through accident, it went wrong. The same difficulties which had beset Johnson's column beset Baldwin's—the rugged character of the Chailak valley, and finding the way over such country in the dark. It was not until 5.15 a.m. (August 9) that Baldwin's force reached the head of the ravine and the farm below the last slope towards Chanuk Bair. This was hours behind time, and the men were parched and tired.

The hitch was fatal. In the interim, relying upon the arrival of Baldwin's force, the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade had been thrown forward. Their immediate objective was the col between Hill Q and Hill 305. Part of the 6th Gurkhas gained the crest, and some of the 6th South Lancashires. The enemy broke, and the attacking troops pressed him down the reverse slope. In front of the attacking troops appeared a bird's-eye view of the waters of the Dardanelles, the Narrows, and the Asiatic shore. This dashing onset was led by Major C. G. L. Allanson of the Gurkhas. But the triumph was short-lived. The appearance of these British troops on the southern slope was the signal for an opening by batteries of heavy guns ready trained on this spot. The enemy saw, too, that the attacking force was not numerous. It was just daybreak, and Baldwin's men

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were still toiling up the head on the Chailak ravine. Recovering from their momentary panic the Turks rallied. They were in far greater strength, and they came back in a counter-attack. The thin line of Gurkhas and Lancashires was pressed up to the col, over it, and down the reverse (northern) side. They were forced back upon their original positions.

But though outnumbered this small force of two weak battalions had fought well, and their resistance had given Baldwin the opportunity of deploying his column on Rhododendron Spur. He at once threw forward the 10th Hampshires together with two companies of the 6th East Lancashire Regiment. Those troops advanced up the slope towards Chanuk Bair with the bayonet. This was the moment when the enemy, coming down the northern slope of the adjacent col, was pressing his advantage. The assault of the Hampshires and the East Lancashires reached the top of the main ridge, but there it encountered a powerful Turkish force moving to counter-attack. It could not hold. Baldwin's men were swept down the declivity and obliged to dig in on the farm. Between them and the Gurkhas and South Lancashires there was driven in a hostile wedge.

Baldwin's attack checked, the enemy turned his attention once more to Johnson's force, which still kept its footing at the western end of the main rise. Effort after effort was made to shift it, and effort after effort failed.

Save for the limited footing at the western extremity of the main ridge the British line on the morning of August 9 was at the foot of the northern slope, that is to say exactly where it was at daybreak on August 7. The subsequent attacks had been made and had been worsted in detail. And they had been very costly. The total casualties up to and including August 9 had reached 8,500 men. These of course included the fighting at Lone Pine, where all the while the struggle had gone on with sustained fury. Most, however, had been incurred in the attacks since August 6 on the main ridge. In the early hours of August 10 Johnson's men had to be

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relieved. They had been fighting straight ahead for three days and three nights—seventy-two hours—with hardly a pause, and that on the top of a long march and a long climb. Such stamina borders on the phenomenal. They were replaced by the 6th Loyal North Lancashires and the 5th Wiltshires.

In the interval the enemy had been massing for a supreme effort to clear the British off this foothold on the summit. At daybreak on August 10, accordingly, he attacked with the infantry of an entire division, stiffened by three extra battalions. The North Lancashires, with nothing save shallow trenches for protection—if they could be called trenches—were overwhelmed; the Wiltshires, who were behind time on coming up, were caught exposed, and swept away by the avalanche.

The right of Baldwin's position on the farm, held by the Hampshires, had now been exposed. It was driven in and with heavy losses. The situation of Baldwin's force had in fact become precarious. Disaster was averted for the time being by the naval guns and the field artillery. Both the ships and the land batteries focussed on Battleship Hill and this western end of the crest, for a strong force of the enemy was moving up that way. As the Turks topped the higher ground they were met by this blast of fire. And its effect was the more deadly owing to the machine-guns of the New Zealanders of Johnson's column now in reserve. They got in at close range upon men advancing in close order. The carnage was appalling, and the attack smashed.

But while Baldwin was occupied with this struggle on his right, the enemy, topping the crest to the north-east, descended in mass on his left. His line there was broken and some of his troops driven down the ravine. Baldwin himself with his staff and the centre of his line on the farm held their ground. It was a fight to the death. Repulsed, the Turks came on again and again, "Allah" their battle-cry. The troops on the left, rallied at the foot of the hill by Staff-Captain Street, who was supervising the transport of food and water,

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followed him back to the farm, and under his leadership plunged once more into the conflict. It had now become a roaring *mêlée* in which men gripped each other by the throat and closed with butt and bayonet. No quarter was given. Though their ranks were ripped by shell ; though they were fired into without cessation and without mercy by Johnson's Force from the British right, its men maddened by the spectacle ; though under the sweep of machine-guns and the hail of rifle shot they fell by hundreds and in heaps, the Turks fought like men frenzied by the lust of blood. English lads, tired, and half dead with thirst but fighting to the last, were slaughtered in whole companies like cattle. It was a scene of unrestrained devilry. The ground of the farm became soaked in human blood, amid which lay the dead and dying, frequently locked together as they had perished in the last grip ; mixed up inextricably. In the memories of the men who witnessed and survived it, the episode and its roar of agony and tornado of explosions were branded for ever as with a stamp of fire. Baldwin and his staff fell where they stood. General Cooper fell, and General Cayley, and other commanding officers. Baldwin's column was shattered, but the enemy's attack had in the effort been at the same time so utterly broken that the ragged remnant of it had in all haste to be withdrawn across the summit, still chased by flying lead.

Coincidentally with this conflict, the climax, though not the crisis of the battle, there was another onset against the 4th Australian Brigade, an onset beaten off, as others had been, with heavy enemy losses, and there was an attack against the 4th South Wales Borderers holding the Damajelik Bair. This last had equally bad fortune. Its defeat was due to the unshakable intrepidity of Lieut.-Colonel Gillespie, worthy of the fine corps he commanded. He paid for the victory with his life. In this fighting of August 10 another 3,500 were added to the British casualties. Those of the enemy were heavier, as indeed they had been at every stage of these operations, but he had frustrated the British plan.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE TRAGEDY OF SUVLA

Causes of the delay in the advance at Suvla—A question of guns—The water muddle—Sufferings of the troops—and inaction—Incomplete co-operation—General Hamilton intervenes—Opportunities lost—British attack of August 9 on Tekke Tepe forestalled and repulsed—Suvla enterprise already a failure—British attack on Anafarta ridge defeated (August 10)—Rapid increase of enemy's strength—Attack of August 12 on Keretch Tepe Sirt—General Stopford retires—Heavy British losses—General Hamilton asks for 50,000 further reinforcements—They are refused—Transfer of the 2nd Mounted Division from Egypt—Battle for Ismail Oglu Hill, August 21—A British reverse—Reasons for the failure—Cox's flanking operations north of the Anzac front—The last fight of the campaign.

WHILE it is true that on August 10 not a Turk had been left on the British side of Sari Bair who was not, to quote the words of General Hamilton, either dead, wounded or a prisoner, it was none the less true that in its main purpose, the seizure of the summit, the action had failed. It had been a costly battle. Some 12,000 British and, including the losses in the Lone Pine fighting, more than 20,000 of the enemy had fallen. But for the time, at all events, the enemy could afford his loss, severe as it had been. He had defeated the British design, and he felt himself to be secure.

In these circumstances the landing at Suvla had missed its real objective. The aim of that operation had been to prevent the enemy from swinging his weight against the British centre, but to prevent that it was imperative at once to bring the strength of the Suvla corps to bear as an integral part of the battle; its left wing, in fact. At the moment of their landing the 9th Army Corps were, as compared with the Turks

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confronting them, in overwhelming force; and the landing had undoubtedly taken the enemy by surprise. At the same time, it was evident that this opportunity would almost certainly be brief, and if missed, would not recur. It may be that since his troops were men of the New Army who had never been in action before, General Stopford judged it best in the first instance to make good his footing. Whatever the causes time was lost when time, already too short, was priceless.

One cause, at any rate, is not in doubt. In the opinion of General Stopford operations by his troops as part of the main battle could not effectively be embarked upon unless his infantry were sufficiently supported by field guns. By daybreak on August 7 there had been got ashore two Highland mountain batteries, and one battery of the R.F.A. This of itself was a remarkable achievement in the time, and every credit for it is due to the Naval men who carried it out. While waiting for the disembarkation of his artillery, General Stopford's concern appears to have been to make sure of the positions he considered it advisable to seize and hold.

Those positions included the Keretch Tepe Sirt. To stiffen the attack of the 34th Brigade in that direction, north of Suvla Bay, General Stopford wished the six battalions of the 10th Division who had arrived under the command of Brigadier-General Hill to land at A Beach. To that proposal, however, the Naval authorities were opposed, probably because of the shoal water. The six battalions were therefore put ashore at C Beach. But from C Beach they were marched to Lala Baba, and then across the narrow spit of land dividing the Salt Lake from the sea to Hill 10. The distance from C Beach to Hill 10 is about six miles. Crossing the spit, they came under the fire of the enemy's guns on Chocolate Hill. There is no doubt, as General Hamilton records, that this move caused "loss, delay, and fatigue." And there can be no doubt that as far as the main battle was concerned it was a mistaken move. Three more battalions of the 10th Division, arriving early on August 7 from Mudros, were put ashore at A Beach,

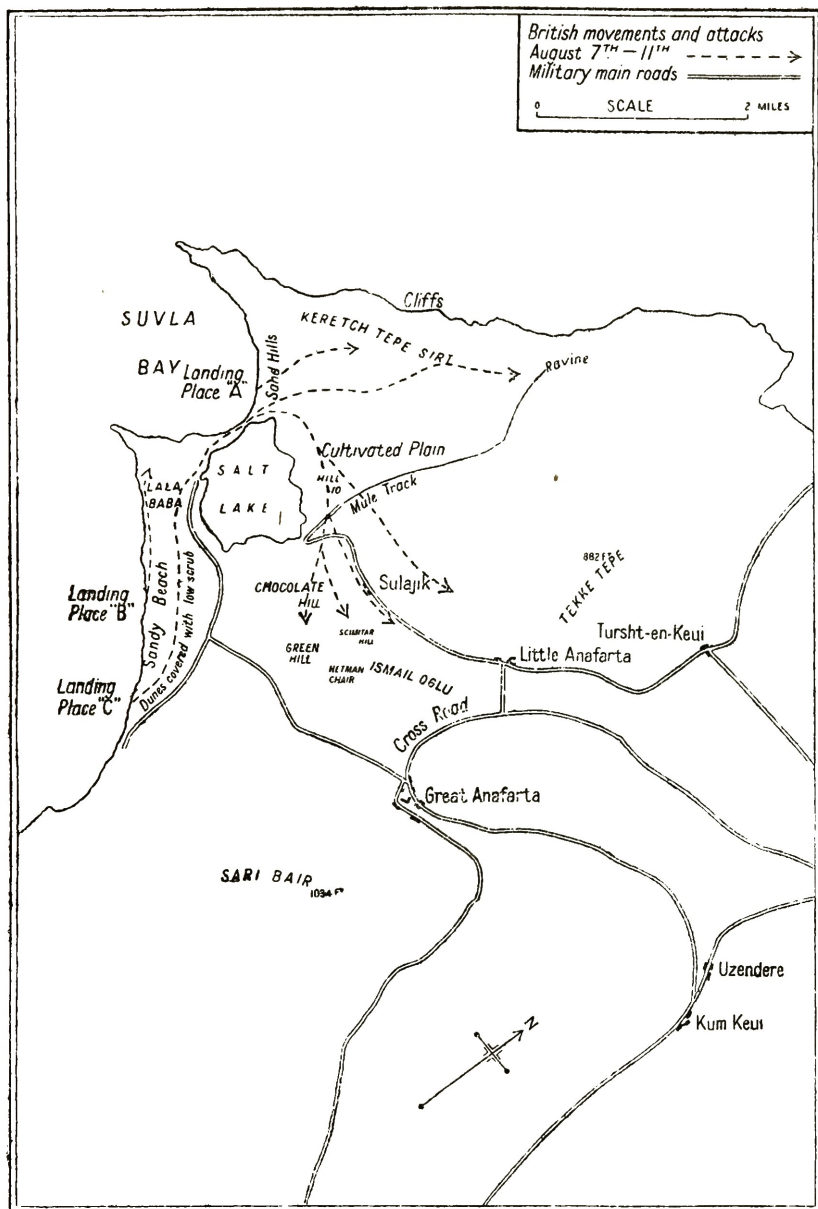
## BRITISH CAMPAIGNS IN THE NEARER EAST

and there was landed there another battalion of the 31st Brigade which it had been intended to put shore at C Beach.

There were now to the north of the Salt Lake the 31st Brigade (of the 10th Division) and the 32nd and 34th Brigades (of the 11th Division). These three brigades comprised the chief strength of the Army Corps under General Stopford's command.

It has already been mentioned that inland from the Salt Lake there runs a line of low hills, the axis or chine of this rise being east and west, parallel that is to say with the main axis of Sari Bair. And between these low hills on the one side and the much loftier mass of Sari Bair on the other is a valley along which runs, from the Salt Lake, a road leading to the village of Biyuk (Great) Anafarta, and then on to Boghali and Maidos. On the other (northern) side of the low hills lies a second valley, the Topalin Mazar Dere, along which is also a road leading to Anafarta Sagir (or Little Anafarta) and from that village strikes along the peninsula towards Bulair. The two villages of Great and Little Anafarta are connected by a cross road over the ridge. To the north of this second valley rises Tekke Tepe, a mass similar to Sari Bair, and of nearly the same elevation. Hence the aspect of the country, looking at it from the west, is that of the two higher masses, one to the north and one to the south, with the lower (Anafarta) ridge between them, and in the foreground the Salt Lake, to the north-east of it a patch of flat land about a mile square.

General Stopford had thrown the larger part of his force towards the entrance of the second valley. It was essential, of course, to secure the intervening ridge, and that operation had been entrusted to General Hammersley with the 11th Division. The Anafarta ridge as it runs inland rises, and its culminating point is at the eastern end—the hill named by the Turks the Ismail Oglu. This was the important position on the rise, for it commanded both Great and Little Anafarta, the cross road and the roads in the valleys.



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Hammersley gained a footing on the ridge at its western end (Chocolate Hill), but found the enemy already strongly posted and could make no further headway. Chocolate Hill had been carried in a rush by the 6th Lincolns and the 6th Border Regiment, who alike, though "raw" troops, displayed great steadiness and gallantry.

In the meantime the 10th Division, under the command of General Sir B. Mahon, had been pushing the attack upon Keretch Tepe Sirt. The weight of the fighting here fell upon the 31st Brigade, formed of the 6th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the 6th Royal Irish (Munster) Fusiliers, and the 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers. But here too, the enemy, in part a force of gendarmes, put up a stiff opposition. The ground over which an advance had to be made was rugged and difficult, but the Irishmen, though this was their first experience of battle, fought like veterans. A footing on the ridge was secured.

Concerning these operations of August 7 it has to be observed, to begin with, that the two attacks were in opposite directions, one to the south and one to the north of Hill 10, a procedure on the face of it somewhat singular. Next they had no direct or immediate relationship with the attack then going on against Sari Bair. They appear to have been conceived, for the time being at any rate, on a semi-independent footing.

The great difficulty that arose was that of water. These troops, now campaigning for the first time, had come from Mitylene and Mudros; they had been landed either the night before or at dawn on that day; they had most of them faced a longish march; finally, they had been through hours of fighting. It was hard work, and it was all the harder because of the August heats.

On the night of August 7 the sun sank, as it does in the Levant in the height of summer, in a riot of gorgeous colour, and the hills faded from a fiery red to a glorious blue, contrasting with the rainbow hues of the firmament. But to men at once jaded and tortured by thirst this grandiose spectacle made no appeal.

Arrangements for the distribution of water to the

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troops had not worked well. As a stand-by a supply of water had been brought on the ships in tanks, but that plainly would not go far, and reliance was placed on making use of the wells in the Suvla Bay area. That does not appear to have been done, though of course it should have been among the first measures taken. The troops remained dependent upon water brought to the landing places in the lighters, and from them distributed by hose pipes into petrol tins, pakhals, milk cans and other vessels. North of Suvla Bay this had to be carried out under the enemy's fire. The distribution of the water was both hazardous and irregular. Some of the lighters grounded too far off shore for the water to be served, and men had to swim out to them. Water was the common craving. It has been said that in certain instances the hose was cut by men unable to wait. If so demoralisation had already set in, but injuries of that kind may also have been due to shot, or to dragging the pipes over stones. In any event much of the precious fluid ran to waste. So urgent was the situation that, to supply the troops in the fighting line—though, his opinion regarding artillery support being what it was, General Stopford was especially anxious to land the artillery horses—this part of the disembarkation was put off in order to send ashore the pack mules to carry water up from the beach. Rightly the pack mules should have gone immediately after the infantry in any case. Their detention with the object of landing artillery had made the water difficulty doubly acute.

And in part certainly this water difficulty was the cause of delay. Until their sufferings from thirst had been relieved the troops could not go on. General Stopford, knowing the importance of time, issued orders for a continuance of the advance. Both the Divisional Commanders sent back word to say that, in the condition in which their men were, they could not move. Unable to get his guns ashore, as he believed was necessary, General Stopford apparently accepted these objections as sufficient.

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"It was," General Hamilton has stated, "lack of artillery support which finally decided him (General Stopford) to acquiesce in a policy of going slow, which, by the time it reached the troops, became translated into a period of inaction. The Divisional Generals were in fact informed that 'in view of the inadequate artillery support,' General Stopford did not wish them to make frontal attacks on entrenched positions, but desired them, as far as possible, to try to turn any trenches that were met with. Within the terms of this instruction lies the root of our failure to make use of the precious daylight hours of the 8th of August."

"Normally," General Hamilton goes on to observe, "it may be correct to say that in modern warfare infantry cannot be expected to advance without artillery preparation. But in a landing on a hostile shore the order has to be inverted. The infantry must advance and seize a suitable position to cover the landing, and provide the artillery positions for the main thrust. The very existence of the force; its facilities for munitions and supplies; its power to reinforce, must absolutely depend on the infantry being able instantly to make good sufficient ground without the aid of artillery other than can be supplied for the purpose by *floating batteries*."

"This is not a condition which should take the commander of a covering force by surprise. It is one already foreseen. Driving power was required, and even a certain ruthlessness to brush aside pleas for a respite for tired troops. The one fatal error was inertia. And inertia prevailed."

Undoubtedly General Stopford's judgment regarding artillery support was in the circumstances inapplicable, and it illustrates one of the weaknesses which all along had marked the Gallipoli operations—the tendency to overlook their amphibious character. Interdependence of the land forces and the fleet was the secret of whatever effectiveness the Expedition might have. But interdependence meant departure from recognised rules of both naval and military procedure, and there was

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reluctance to enter upon such departures where there ought to have been keenness in studying all the possibilities. There was reluctance to pit ships against land defences, because the theory in favour was against it. That increased the weight thrown upon the land forces and aggravated their losses. There was reluctance on the part of the military commanders to rely upon the Fleet as it ought to have been relied upon.

Having, partly owing to his views concerning field artillery and partly to his reluctance to rely upon the naval guns as a substitute—they ought to have been the *backbone* of his activities from first to last, field artillery or none—got the water problem into the tangle it had become, General Stopford had in truth no choice for the moment save to go slow. It is easy to blame his Divisional Commanders, but the protests of the Divisional Commanders on this point were justified. And it is a very open question indeed whether “a certain ruthlessness to brush away the pleas for a respite for tired troops” would not have made matters worse. To have forced men parched with thirst—it may be said half-maddened by thirst—to yet further exertions while in that state, and reduce them, as they would rapidly have been reduced, to the very extreme of exhaustion, must have exposed them in the event of any strong enemy counter-attack to be slaughtered helplessly.

This going slow was not, however, the cause or root of the failure; it was no more than a consequence. The *cause* was the incompleteness of the naval and military co-operation. It was trifling to assign only cruisers and monitors to support such operations as those against Sari Bair and the Suvla landing. In this instance against the numerical strength of the enemy the full support of the Fleet, underwater attack or no underwater attack, was the course that, joined to sound military dispositions, might reasonably have assured success. In the absence of that full support General Birdwood, hero as he was, had imposed upon him

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a task humanly impossible, and 12,000 brave men fell in trying to do the impossible. In the absence of that full support many more brave men fell at Suvla. Some ships were saved but the Expedition to Gallipoli was wrecked, and the whole trend of events in Western Asia and Eastern Europe changed.

Not receiving from the Suvla force the aid he had reckoned upon, and knowing that the struggle for Sari Bair had reached its decisive hour, General Hamilton in the early morning of August 8 sent an officer of his Staff to Suvla to report on the situation. Arriving from the Commandant's post at Anzac this officer informed the General by telegraph that the Turks were withdrawing their guns. There was no hostile gunfire, and but little hostile rifle fire. To all appearances the enemy was weak, and there was good ground for accepting the appearances as reflecting the reality. The water tangle had by this time been taken in hand and was being straightened out. But General Stopford's opinion concerning the need for landing his guns before venturing upon further operations of importance seems to have remained unmodified.

In the circumstances, leaving General W. P. Braithwaite, the Chief of his Staff, to carry on at Headquarters in the interim, General Hamilton went himself to Suvla. He had begun to feel, as he afterwards declared, that all was not well. He reached General Stopford's headquarters on board the British warship, *Jonquil*, lying off the bay, at five in the afternoon of August 8.

What there took place may be related in General Hamilton's own words. "General Stopford," he wrote, "informed me that the General Officer commanding 11th Division was confident of success in an attack he was to make at dawn next morning (the 9th). I felt no such confidence. Beyond a small advance by a part of the 11th Division between the Chocolate Hills and Ismail Oglu Tepe, and some further progress along the Keretch Tepe Sirt ridge by the 10th Division, *the day of the 8th had been lost*. The commander of the 11th Division had, it seems, ordered strong patrols to be

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pushed forward so as to make good all the strong positions in advance which could be occupied without serious fighting ; but, as he afterwards reported, ' little was done in this respect.' Thus a priceless twelve hours had already gone to help the chances of the Turkish reinforcements which were, I knew, both from naval and aerial sources, actually on the march for Suvla. But when I urged that even now, at the eleventh hour, the 11th Division should make a concerted attack upon the hills, I was met by a *non possumus*. The objections of the morning were no longer valid ; the men were now well rested, watered, and fed. But the divisional commanders disliked the idea of an advance by night, and General Stopford did not care, it seemed, to force their hands.

" So it came about that I was driven to see whether I could not, myself, put concentration of effort and purpose into the direction of the large number of men ashore. The Corps Commander made no objection. He declared himself to be as eager as I could be to advance. The representations made by the Divisional Commanders had seemed to him insuperable. If I could see my way to get over them no one would be more pleased than himself.

" Accompanied by Commodore Roger Keyes and Lieut.-Colonel Aspinall, of the Headquarters General Staff, I landed on the beach, where all seemed quiet and peaceful, and saw the Commander of the 11th Division, Major-General Hammersley. I warned him the sands were running out fast, and that by dawn the high ground to his front might very likely be occupied in force by the enemy. He saw the danger, but declared that it *was a physical impossibility, at so late an hour (6 p.m.), to get out orders for a night attack*, the troops being very much scattered. There was no other difficulty now, but this was insuperable ; he could not recast his orders or get them round to his troops in time. But one brigade, the 32nd, was, so General Hammersley admitted, more or less concentrated and ready to move. The General Staff Officer of the Division, Colonel Neil

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Malcolm, a soldier of experience on whose opinion I set much value, was consulted. He agreed that the 32nd Brigade was now in a position to act. I therefore issued a direct order that, even if it were only the 32nd Brigade, the advance should begin at the earliest possible moment, so that a portion at least of the 11th Division should anticipate the Turkish reinforcements on the heights and dig themselves in there on some good tactical point.

"In taking upon myself the serious responsibility of thus dealing with a detail of divisional tactics, I was careful to limit the scope of the interference. Beyond directing that the one brigade which was ready to move at once should try and make good the heights before the enemy got on to them, I did nothing and said nothing calculated to modify or in any way to affect the attack already planned for the morning. Out of the thirteen battalions which were to have advanced against the heights at dawn, four were now to anticipate that movement by trying to make good the key of the enemy's position at once and under cover of darkness.

"I have not been able to get a clear and coherent account of the doings of the 32nd Brigade; but I have established the fact that it did not actually commence its advance until 4 a.m. on the 9th of August. The reason given is that the units of the Brigade were scattered. In General Stopford's despatch he says that 'One company of the East Yorks Pioneer Battalion succeeded in getting to the top of the hill north of Anafarta, but the rest of the battalion and of the Brigade were attacked from both flanks during their advance and fell back on a line north and south of Sulajik. Very few of the leading company or of the Royal Engineers who accompanied it got back, and that evening the strength of the battalion was nine officers and 380 men.'"

The hill Tekke Tepe, north of Little Anafarta, is 700 feet high, and from this position, could it have been taken and held, the whole of the lower intervening ridge, including Ismail Oglu and the cross road, and

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the road from Little Anafarta towards Bulair would have been commanded by the British batteries, assuming that field artillery was more effective for that purpose than naval gunnery, though of course the two combined would have been the most effective. But the enemy had been able to move up his reinforcements. He had inflicted on the 32nd Brigade a costly reverse. An hour and a half later the British assault was renewed, and with a larger body of troops. The Turkish forces, however, had also and to a greater extent been stiffened in the meantime and the renewed attack had no better success. "It seems reasonable," General Hamilton has stated, "to suppose that had the complete Division started at 4 a.m. on the 9th, or better still at 10 p.m. on the 8th, they would have made good the whole of the heights in front of them." Most probably they would.

Watching the renewed attack at dawn on the 9th General Hamilton realised from the volume of the Turkish gun and rifle fire that the movement had been forestalled.

"This," he recorded, "was a bad moment. Our attack failed; our losses were very serious. The enemy's enfilading shrapnel fire seemed to be especially destructive and demoralising, the shell bursting low and all along our line. Time after time it threw back our attack just as it seemed upon the point of making good. The 33rd Brigade at first made most hopeful progress in its attempt to seize Ismail Oglu Tepe. Some of the leading troops gained the summit, and were able to look over on to the other side. Many Turks were killed here. Then the centre seemed to give way. Whether this was the result of the shrapnel fire or whether, as some say, an order to retire came up from the rear, the result was equally fatal to success. As the centre fell back the steady, gallant behaviour of the 6th Battalion Border Regiment, and the 6th Battalion Lincoln Regiment, on either flank was especially noteworthy. Scrub fires on Hill 70 did much to harass and hamper our troops. When the 32nd Brigade fell back before attacks from the slopes of the hill north of Anafarta

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Sagir and from the direction of Abrijka they took up the line north and south through Sulajik. Here their left was protected by two battalions of the 34th Brigade, which came up to their support. The line was later on prolonged by the remainder of the 34th Brigade and two battalions of the 159th Brigade of the 53rd Division. Their right was connected with the Chocolate Hills by the 33rd Brigade on the position to which they had returned after their repulse from the upper slopes of Ismail Oglu Tepe.

"Some of the units which took part in this engagement acquitted themselves very bravely. I regret I have not had sufficient detail given me to enable me to mention them by name. The Divisional Commander speaks with appreciation of one freshly-landed battalion of the 53rd Division, a Hereford battalion, presumably the 1/1st Herefordshire, which attacked with impetuosity and courage between Hetman Chair and Kaslar Chair, about Azmak Dere, on the extreme right of his line."

A tragic story, for in fact it marked the failure of the Suvla enterprise. But General Hamilton determined to make another effort. During the night of August 8 the 53rd (Territorial) Division had arrived and disembarked. He ordered it up to Suvla. The Division was without artillery.

Accordingly, on August 10 a third attack was delivered on the Anafarta ridge. It was to be made by the 53rd Division, General Lindley in command, with the 11th Division in support. Notable as was alike the gallantry of the men and the devotion of their officers, the attack failed. It meant hard climbing as well as hard fighting, and the enemy had yet further strengthened himself. In the interval since August 7 he had trebled his numbers.

The whole British force at Suvla, from near the Asmak Dere to the Keretch Tepe Sirt, now found itself obliged to entrench. Here, too, the campaign looked like degenerating into immobility.

The succeeding operations may be briefly told. On August 11 the 54th (Territorial) Division landed. On August 12 Sir Ian Hamilton proposed to General

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Stopford that the newly arrived Division should carry out a night march in order at dawn on August 13 to attack the massif north of Little Anafarta-Kavak Tepe, and Tekke Tepe. The flat tract north-east of the Salt Lake, known as Kuchuk Anafarta Ova, is enclosed and cultivated. There was reason to believe that the enemy held this bit of country, and to open the way for the 54th Division it was necessary to clear him out. The 163rd Brigade, sent forward for that purpose, effected the clearance. It was in the course of this fighting that Colonel Sir H. Beauchamp, in command of the 1/5 Norfolks, finding the Turks in front of him falling back, followed them up. From the flat fields the pursuit reached the broken and wooded ground on the lower slopes of the massif. Men of the battalion who were wounded or fell out owing to thirst straggled back during the night to camp. They had left the Colonel and the rest of the battalion still pushing on. News of this little force, 17 officers, including the Colonel, and some 250 men, was awaited, but none was received. They had entered the forest of scrub covering the slopes of the hills and had totally disappeared.

The projected night march by the 54th Division was given up. In place of it an attack was made on the enemy's position on the summit of Keretch Tepe Sirt.

The plan of this assault provided for a bombardment by the warships *Grampus* and *Foxhound* from the sea, and by three batteries of guns from the land side, one of them a battery of heavies. The 10th Division were to attack along the ridge, part of the 54th Division (the 162nd Brigade) supporting on their right. The charge, led with great gallantry by the 6th Royal Dublins, cleared the entire height. But at the farther end of this ridge, and divided from it only by a small and not very deep ravine, is another and yet higher ridge also in line with the coast. On and from this higher ground the enemy swept the forward point of the Keretch Tepe Sirt with his fire. The 5th Irish Fusiliers, and the 5th Inniskillings holding the trenches, here met with heavy

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losses. Reinforcements were sent forward. Before they could arrive the forward trenches had had to be evacuated.

On August 15 General Stopford gave up the command of the 9th Army Corps. The infantry strength of the four divisions composing it had been reduced by losses and hardship to less than 30,000 rifles. Losses in battle and through wastage totalled over 18,000 men. Major-General H. B. de Lisle, appointed to the temporary command, received orders as soon as possible to get the Corps once more into fighting trim with a view to a renewed attack upon Ismail Oglu Tepe and the Anafarta Spur.

General Hamilton estimated that he needed a further 50,000 men as reinforcements with munitions to correspond. He was told that he could have neither. With these additional forces his judgment was that "it seemed, humanly speaking, a certainty that if this help could be sent *at once* we could still clear a passage for our Fleet to Constantinople." The opinion implies that the military operations were the primary feature. It was the other way about.

The reason given for the refusal, he states, "was one which prevented further insistence." There was nothing for it, therefore, save to go on with the means he had at hand. The reinforcements received were the 2nd Mounted Division from Egypt, for this service in Gallipoli organised as dismounted troops. They were landed in the Suvla area, and there too was transferred the 29th Division from the lines before Achi Baba. These various preparations occupied the interval until August 21. The plan was an attack upon Ismail Oglu Tepe.

This was the last of the greater battles fought in the Gallipoli campaign. The scheme of tactics was entrusted to General de Lisle.

The assault upon Ismail Oglu Hill was to be made by the 29th Division and the 11th Division. On the left of the line there was to be a holding attack by the 53rd and 54th Divisions extending from Sulajik to the

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Keretch Tepe Sirt. It was a simple scheme and a sound one. Better, of course, it would have been had there also been an attack thrown forward on the British right, but General Hamilton considered that many of the battalions of the 9th Corps had been too highly tried. It was too soon, he thought, to call upon them for a fresh effort.

In a very remarkable sense of the term Ismail Oglu Hill constitutes a natural fortress. The rise from the level of the more westerly part of the ridge of which it forms a part is abrupt, and while the difference in level above the lower section of the chine is not more than 130 feet, the difference presents itself as almost a cliff, broken, like the rest of such formations in Gallipoli, by steep ravines. These are choked for the most part with thick hollyoak scrub, leaving only very narrow tracks. In every spot where it could get a hold this hardy dwarf tree had rooted itself, so that the mass of the Ismail Oglu Hill appeared to be covered by it. To the west, however, along the lower part of the chine called Green Hill, the ground is open and bare, and the attack had to be made along the chine from Chocolate Hill over this exposed expanse. On the higher ground of Ismail Oglu which is comparatively flat-topped, and concealed among the scrub, the enemy had over the open lower level an unrivalled field of fire.

It will be seen how unfortunate had been loss of the opportunity to seize such a formidable position by surprise. Not only was the enemy now in much stronger force; he had had time firmly to entrench himself, and his defences were skilful.

Viewed from Chocolate Hill, the higher part of the ridge presented itself as two abrupt spurs, one, the Hetman Chair, extending towards the south-west; the other, Scimitar Hill, projecting westward. Between the two lay a ravine or depression rapidly narrowing towards its head, and shaped therefore like a funnel. On the higher ground along both sides of this ravine and round its head the Turks had laid out entrenchments in the form roughly of a horse-shoe. The ravine, in

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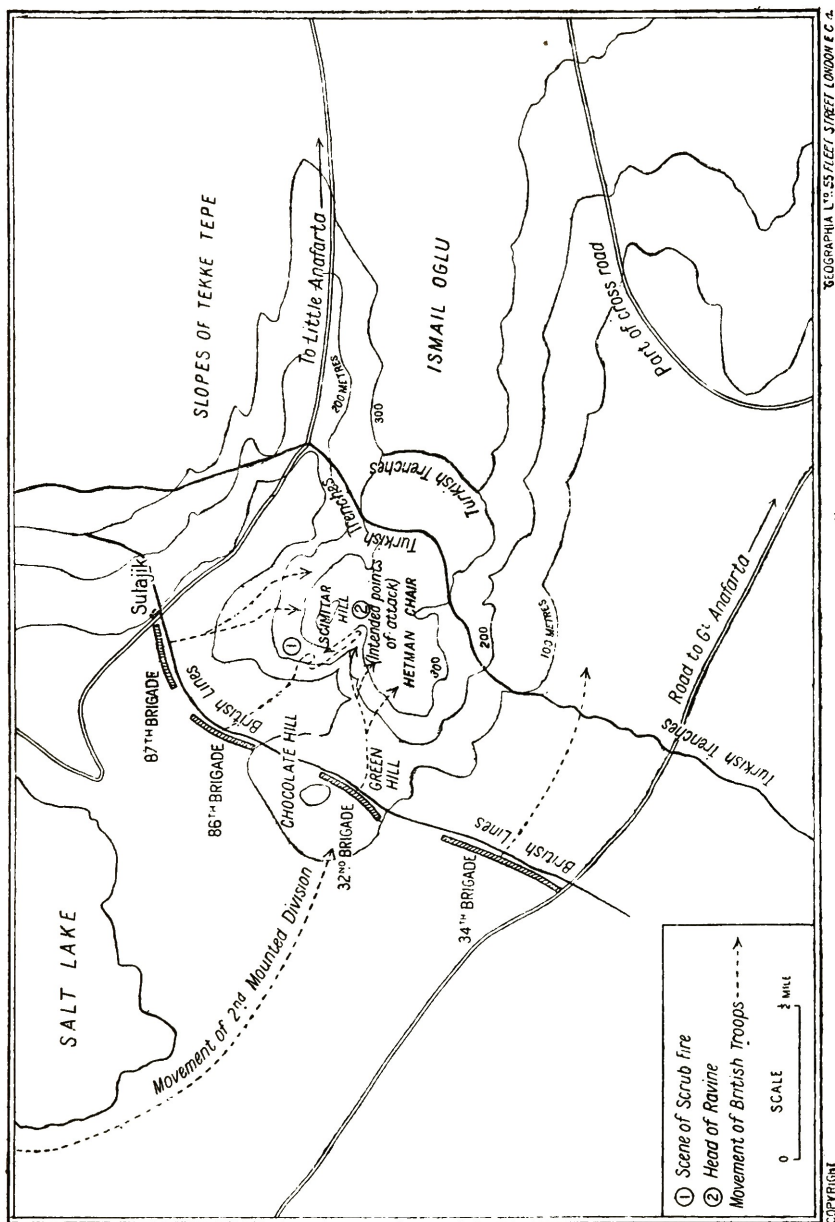
short, had been converted as far as that could be done into a trap. In case, however, of these defences being captured the enemy had laid out a second line farther up the ridge and on ground which commanded the access from the head of the ravine. This second line of trenches formed a semi-circle, so that a deadly converging fire could be poured into any troops gaining the plateau by way of the depression.

A frontal assault upon such defences, strongly held and by a confident enemy, was about as impossible an operation as could well be imagined, and one which, while there were a thousand chances to one against its success, must in any event be extravagantly costly. The only feasible proceeding was to turn these dispositions by an attack in flank. How far that was provided for, and its results, will appear from what took place.

The British assault was fixed for the afternoon of August 21, and fixed for the afternoon upon the calculation that the light of the westering sun would dazzle the enemy's observers and marksmen. The sunlight on an August afternoon in Gallipoli is glaring, and here it shot right up the valley. In those conditions towards the end of the day the westward slopes of Ismail Oglu showed up with a glow like dull fire, and the defences were then best revealed.

No doubt the attack had to be regulated upon a cut and dried programme as to date and time on account of the warships which were to take part in it, but there is always a risk in counting upon weather. It happened on this particular afternoon that the landscape was veiled in a luminous heat haze. The mist was dense enough to obscure the view of Ismail Oglu in any detail from the British lines ; it was not dense enough to hide objects silhouetted against the western sky. Indeed, by taking the dazzle off the view westward, it vastly improved visibility from the Turkish viewpoint.

The enemy's front stretching across the higher part of the spur, relatively narrow, was to be subjected to begin with to a concentrated and intensive fire. Under



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the conditions the fire both of the ships and of the land batteries was somewhat haphazard. General Hamilton had wished to postpone the attack, but "for various reasons this," he relates, "was not possible." What the reasons were he does not say, but manifestly, by parity of reasoning if conditions of light were so important to success, they were, being adverse, just as weighty a factor against success.

At 3 in the afternoon the assault was launched by an advance of the 11th Division on the right.

It was intended more immediately to gain a footing both on Hetman Chair and on Scimitar Hill.

From the southern face of the former spur lines of Turkish trenches extended on the lower level across the valley of the Azmak, barring the way towards Great Anafarta. The 34th Brigade of the 11th Division took these trenches in the first rush and with little loss.

On the left the 87th Brigade of the 29th Division swarmed up the northern slopes of Scimitar Hill from the valley leading to Little Anafarta, and won a footing on the ridge.

At the two extremes, therefore, of the line of attack the battle had begun well. So far so good.

But in the centre, where the main weight of the assault was thrown, the operations went wrong. Suspecting probably that the ravine was a trap, General de Lisle had intended the assault here to avoid it. The troops were to gain the higher level of the ridge, if possible, by making their way on the left up the westward slopes of Scimitar Hill; on the right, up the north-westward slopes of Hetman Chair. These points of attack were on either side just outside the declivities of the ravine, and to a certain extent were "dead ground," that is, ground not fully exposed to the enemy's fire.

The attack up the westward slopes of Scimitar Hill was entrusted to the 86th Brigade of the 29th Division, co-operating with the 87th. But whether by the accident of shell fire, or by hostile design—and more probably by design—no sooner had the 87th Brigade gained a footing on the plateau than the dwarf oak scrub on all

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the upper part of the westward slopes burst into a blaze. It was as dry as a bone, and burned furiously, sending up an enormous volume of smoke. To the advance of the 86th Brigade this wall of fire presented an impenetrable bar. In trying to work round it to the right, which was to the windward, they found themselves in the ravine. There, of course, they were shot at from both sides; ambushed, in fact. Nevertheless, the leading troops reached the head of the ravine. Unable, however, to keep their footing in face of the fire poured into them, they had to retire, and retreat down the ravine being even more deadly than the ascent, were compelled to work along the nearer slope, that is, the slope of Scimitar Hill facing south-west. There, finally, they established themselves on a ledge which afforded some cover.

Coincidentally the 32nd Brigade of the 11th Division, missing direction owing to the poor visibility in the dash across Green Hill, had moved too far towards the left, and instead of striking the north-western slope of Hetman Chair, also entered the ravine. Their attempted advance up it was repulsed with serious loss. When this mistake in direction became known, the 33rd Brigade, held in reserve, was sent forward to carry out the original plan of assault. They, too, it is said, lost direction in the like manner. At all events this part of the plan broke down in execution.

The result was that neither the success of the 34th Brigade on the right nor that of the 87th Brigade on the left led to anything. With the defeat of the frontal assault in the centre the bodies of troops on the wings had each been left in a dangerous situation.

Looking at the way the battle was going, and the fact that the 11th Division had not gained its objective, it was decided to bring up the 2nd Mounted Division, hitherto held in reserve at Lala Baba. They had to advance round the south of the Salt Lake and for a mile and a half under heavy bursts of shrapnel. The manœuvre was executed in open order, and with a magnificent steadiness. "The advance of these English

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yeomen," General Hamilton records, "was a sight calculated to send a thrill of pride through anyone. Such superb martial spectacles are rare in modern war. Here and there a shell would take toll of a cluster; there they lay; the others moved steadily on; not a man hung back or hurried."

They reached the positions held by the foremost battalions at nightfall; pushed up the ravine favoured by the failing light, and, gaining the top, carried the Turkish trenches on a small rise forming the centre of the enemy's first defences. It was supposed that the plateau had at length been won, but farther on and on yet higher ground there was the semi-circle of Turkish entrenchments. The captured knoll commanded by this semi-circle would in daylight have been untenable. It was judged that, fatigued and thirsty as the men were, a retirement was the best course. The yeomanry fell back upon the line from which the attack had been launched. The British losses in this disastrous action were nearly 5,000 men. They fell most heavily on the 29th Division.

Subsidiary to the operations just recorded, and coincidentally with them, an assault was made under the command of Major-General Cox with a mixed column of Anzac, Irish, Welsh, and Indian troops upon the Turkish positions along the south side of the Great Anafarta valley. The column consisted of—

Two battalions of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles;

Two battalions of the 29th (Irish) Brigade;

The 4th South Wales Borderers;

The 29th Indian Infantry Brigade.

The attack had three objectives: on the left to stiffen the junction of the 11th Division with the Anzac line; in the centre to seize the well at Kabak Kuyu, the source of the Azmak, and a valuable acquisition, while its loss would be a bad one for the enemy; on the right to clear out the Turkish entrenchments to the north-east of Hill 60.

Cox, to achieve these aims, formed his force into three sections, the Irish and Welsh on the left, the Indians in

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the centre, and the Anzacs on the right. The Anzacs were under the command of Russell.

The troops on the left drove the Turks out of a line of outposts, and effected the linking up as intended ; the Indian Brigade seized the Kabak Kuyu well ; on the right the enemy resisted stubbornly, and there was a stiff and swaying fight, in which the summit of Hill 60, the Kaiajik Aghala, was finally won and held against superior forces. This hill lies just beyond Hill 40, where Russell's men established themselves on the night of August 6. Since it commanded the Great Anafarta valley, the position was of tactical importance, indeed of the first importance. Having lost it the Turks essayed repeatedly to retake it, and tried both with bomb and bayonet. In part, and at a reckless sacrifice of life, they succeeded. They regained the summit, but could not regain the southern face. There the Anzacs once more proved that they were terrors to shift. Reinforced by the 18th Australians, just landed, they grimly defied every effort to oust them.

So affairs remained for about a week, the usual bombing and sniping on either side. Then at last the enemy was ejected. The renewed attack was planned by Cox in conjunction with Russell, both past-masters in ruse and resource. It was known that the Turks, or Turko-Germans, meant here to fight to the death. For the operation there were assigned three Anzac brigades, the 4th and 5th Australians, and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, plus the 5th Connaught Rangers of the Irish Brigade. It proved as bitter a struggle as any in the Gallipoli campaign. In the advance the Irishmen were on the left, the Australians on the right, the Mounted Rifles in the centre. The Australians were held by machine-gun fire ; but the New Zealanders reached and cleared the nearer area of the summit. The enemy disputed the ground inch by inch. While, however, he was so engaged, the Connaught Rangers had swept him out of his trenches on the left and turned his defences. It was an extraordinary feat, for it was all done within five minutes. The dash of the Irishmen had

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been simply irresistible. No sooner was the loss realised than the hostile reserves were massed for a counter-attack. There were only 250 of the Rangers, and they were assailed by six times their number. Odds or no odds, they refused to give way. The unequal fight went on for hours, and it was not until midnight—the attack had begun at five in the afternoon—that the heroic remnant of the Rangers was at length outbombed.

The interval had given time for reinforcements to be brought up. The fight on the left had also helped the New Zealanders to keep their grip on the summit. For twenty-four hours longer they were incessantly counter-attacked, and remained immovable. When this resistance had told on the enemy's confidence, and tried his wind, the 10th Australian Light Horse pounced upon him again on the left, and again ousted him. This time the ejection was final. Hill 60 had been won.

The character of this combat may be judged from the fact that the Turkish losses were as heavy as those sustained by the British in the much more extensive battle of August 21; if not heavier. The summit and slopes of Hill 60 were thickly strewn and in places heaped with Turkish dead. On the side of the attack the casualties numbered 1,000, the killed about a fifth of the total. If the main weight had been thrown into these flanking operations instead of into the frontal assault the action of August 21 would in all probability have been a victory.

To all intents this combat for Hill 60 was the last fight. From the end of August the campaign simply petered out. General Hamilton still believed in success; but the British Government had ceased to believe. They had decided to write the Expedition off.

On the spot the decision was forecasted by the non-arrival of drafts and munitions. The stream of each dried up. With the coming of the autumn sickness had begun to take a heavy toll. On October 11 General Hamilton received from Lord Kitchener, Secretary of

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State for War, a cablegram asking for his estimate of the losses likely to be involved in an evacuation of the peninsula. "On the 12th October," he writes, "I replied in terms showing that such a step was to me unthinkable." In plain terms, he declined to comply with the requisition. Four days later (October 16) he was recalled.

## CHAPTER XII

### GALLIPOLI : THE EVACUATION

General Munro's report on the Gallipoli situation—Glaring military disadvantages—Evacuation resolved upon—Winter hardships of the troops—Birdwood's plan for abandonment in three stages—Suvla first evacuated—Success of the scheme—The withdrawal from the Anzac lines—Turkish suspicions at Achi Baba—French Corps Expeditionaire withdrawn—Final abandonment on night of January 8, 1916—The enemy outwitted—Episodes of the embarkation—No losses—The Gallipoli enterprise and its results.

AFTER an interval of twelve days the command of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force was transferred to General Sir C. C. Munro.

That distinguished officer was instructed to report upon the military situation in the Gallipoli Peninsula ; to form an opinion as to whether on military grounds the peninsula ought to be evacuated, or yet another attempt made to carry it ; and finally to estimate the military forces needed to capture the peninsula, to keep the Dardanelles open in that event, and eventually to take Constantinople.

He proceeded to Imbros, where the Headquarters of the Expeditionary Force had been established, and from that place sailed to Gallipoli to pursue his inquiries.

He found the positions occupied by the British forces in his opinion unique in military history. "The mere fringe of the coastline had," he reported, "been secured. The piers and beaches upon which they depended for all requirements of *personnel* and material were exposed to registered and observed artillery fire. Our entrenchments were dominated almost throughout by the Turks. The possible artillery positions were insufficient and

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defective. The Force, in short, held a line possessing every possible military defect. The position was without depth ; the communications insecure and dependent on the weather. No means existed for the concealment and deployment of fresh troops destined for the offensive. The Turks, on the other hand, enjoyed full powers of observation, and abundant artillery positions, and they had been given the time to supplement natural advantages by all the devices at the disposal of the field engineer."

These were grave considerations. But there were others. To begin with, since every corner on the peninsula was exposed to the hostile fire, it was not possible to withdraw any of the troops on the peninsula from the shell-swept area. The troops were enervated by the diseases endemic in the Levant in summer ; there was, in consequence of the losses sustained in earlier battles, a dearth of officers competent to take command of the men ; the augmentation of the Force by attaching to it yeomanry and mounted brigades acting as infantry had not tended to create efficiency ; the proceeding was a makeshift.

Weighing this situation and the state of the Force, General Munro concluded that the Turks—it was clear enough in view of the natural advantages of their position strengthened by field works—could hold the British Expeditionary Force with comparatively few troops, an economy of their resources which, combined with this diversion of the British resources, must favour the prosecution of enemy designs against Bagdad, or against Egypt, or both.

He did not think an advance from the positions held by the Expeditionary troops could reasonably be expected. Nor even were it made did he consider that the position would be materially bettered. The idea of an advance upon Constantinople he dismissed as impracticable. In brief, his judgment was that the troops locked up on the peninsula should be diverted to a more useful theatre of war, and that the diversion was urgent.

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In these circumstances evacuation was decided upon.

It had been determined at the same time to send part of the British forces in the Levant to Salonica. Accordingly, General Munro having been invested with the command of those forces, exclusive of the British troops in Egypt, they were divided into the Salonica Army under the immediate command of General Sir Bryan Mahon, and the Dardanelles Army under the immediate command of General Sir W. Birdwood. The latter had his headquarters at Mudros.

Winter set in on the peninsula of Gallipoli with heavy storms. A gale which began on November 21, and blew for twenty-four hours, reaching at its height the velocity of a hurricane, was accompanied by torrential rain. The downpour turned all the watercourses and brooks into raging torrents, which coming down from the hills in spate swept everything before them. Trenches, particularly in the Suvla area, were flooded out; the floods spread over the flat expanses and cut off communications. In the trenches, dugouts, and billets, very rough and temporary shelters for the most part, the troops were drenched to the skin by the rain, and their stores soaked by muddy flood water. To the storm of rain succeeded a heavy downfall of snow, still accompanied by a high wind, bitterly cold. The cold speedily changed the aspect of the country to one of frozen wintriness. Wet followed by cold sent up the rate of sickness with a bound. In the early days of December 10,000 men had to be shipped off, invalided.

Meanwhile, with the aid of General Birdwood, a plan for evacuation was being worked out. It was happily on the lines of plain common sense. The proposal of General Munro was to carry out the abandonment in three stages.

The first stage was to withdraw troops, animals, and supplies not needed for a long campaign; the second to withdraw men, guns, animals and stores except those required for a defensive during a given period, due allowance being made for contingencies; the third to

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complete the withdrawal as rapidly as possible, leaving behind, if necessary, guns, animals and stores not for the time wanted.

Very wisely, General Munro resolved not to cover the evacuation with any feint of attack. He considered that if that manœuvre failed of its purpose it would do harm, and the probabilities were that it would fail. His decision was to depart from the normal as little as possible. Beyond question that course was by far the more effective ruse.

The actual work of evacuation was entrusted to General Birdwood in association with Rear-Admiral Wemyss. "On receipt of his orders," General Munro records, "Lieut.-General Birdwood proceeded with the skill and promptitude characteristic of all he undertakes." This tribute was well deserved. For months, in the most literal sense of the words, Birdwood had been the life and soul of Anzac. He was no stickler for ceremony. Many a time he had been seen in foremost positions wearing, like his men, nothing more than shirt, trousers, and a hat, and outwardly not to be distinguished from them. Where snipers abounded this was sensible. But though he detested parade, Birdwood was above everything thorough. If he kept in the closest daily touch with his "lads," who were devoted to him, he was a born leader, and neither the discipline nor the *moral* of the Anzacs for a moment wavered. In every instance he scrapped the frills and got at the business. And he did it now. Fortunately, Wemyss was at the same time a "live" man on the Naval side.

The evacuation of the Suvla positions was the initial step. This proceeding by itself could afford the enemy no clue to its intentions. It did not of necessity indicate abandonment of the Gallipoli enterprise. And it afforded the less clue because it was carried out on the lines already noted. From December 10 to December 18 the surplus of the force at Suvla ebbed away, as it were, to seaward.

Then came the final move; a test of the method. Corps behind the lines were to be withdrawn to the

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embarkation beaches first. The lines meanwhile were to be lightly held, but since the distance of some of these points from the beaches was considerable, it was evidently desirable in case of attack to break a hostile rush. With that object intermediate positions had been prepared; one a line to the south of the Salt Lake, extending from the lake to the sea and covering B and C beaches; the other a line to the north of the Salt Lake extending from Hill 10 to the Karakol Dagħ on the coast, and covering A Beach.

The final withdrawal was to take place on the night of December 19–20. The night proved calm, and the full moon was happily veiled by a haze. Just light enough to see close at hand and obviate the possible confusion of total darkness; dark enough to cover movement even at a moderate distance.

The covering ships had taken up their positions, ready to open if the enemy indicated activity.

At half-past one in the morning began the withdrawal and embarkation of corps in the rear. The embarkation proceeded with perfect smoothness. When it had gone far enough the men in the front trenches left them. They were not molested. Every gun, vehicle and animal was embarked. Only a small stock of supplies had to be left behind. Those who were last to leave set fire to them.

The final evacuation of the Anzac position had gone on concurrently with that at Suvla. It was equally without a hitch. Owing, however, to the roughness of the ground, and the gradient of the ravines leading down to the shore, 4 field guns, 2 howitzers (5-inch), a 4.7 naval gun, 2 Hotchkiss "pom-poms," and an "archie" had to be left behind, but destroyed, of course. Some supply carts had also to be left—stripped of their wheels, and 56 mules. The supplies left were fired.

The first effect of the evacuation of Suvla and Anzac was to arouse enemy suspicions either that the force before Achi Baba might be increased, or that position also evacuated. And the enemy, having been presumably outwitted by the evacuations already carried

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out, took measures to prevent either of these possible movements. He increased the number of his heavy guns not only on the Gallipoli side on the Achi Baba front, but on the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles. The object was to keep the landing places round the southern toe of the peninsula under heavy shell fire. This concentration he could afford, since both his troops and his guns ranged against the British at Suvla and Anzac had now been released. It had become important therefore not to delay this part of the evacuation; for the enemy was in superior strength both as regards men and artillery, and if he could render it impossible for the Allied force before Achi Baba either to receive supplies or to withdraw he might compel its surrender with the whole of its equipment and material.

Yet at the last moment apparently there was in the Cabinet at Home some hesitancy as to giving up this foothold. The influences which had originally suggested this Expedition were not yet dead. Evidently with that temerity which jumps to conclusions upon half-truths, the changed conditions on the spot were not properly realised, and even the clearly expressed opinion of Sir Charles Munro did not in some minds carry conviction. Between the final evacuation of Suvla and Anzac and the receipt of orders to withdraw from the position at Cape Helles, which seems in London, curiously enough, to have been esteemed the more valuable, though its intrinsic value by itself was nil, there ensued a delay of eight days. The orders at the same time were "without unduly exposing the *personnel*" to save all the equipment and animals.

Already the French troops employed in this area had been evacuated with the exception of 4,000 men, and most of the French section of the line taken over by the Royal Naval Division and the 86th Brigade.

Here again the same procedure was adopted. There was no attempt to cover the withdrawal by a feint attack; and surplusage was got rid of in night-time embarkations whenever the weather had permitted, the longer nights favouring. In the day-time nothing

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out of the ordinary was to be observed. To keep down the enemy's heavy gun fire the ships of the Fleet opened a counter-bombardment against these hostile batteries, which were now, it was noted, liberally supplied with German shells. Subject to such preliminaries, the final withdrawal was to take place once more in a single night; corps behind the lines got off first; the lines meanwhile to be held much as usual; and the troops to move from them down to the beaches assigned without occupying any intermediate position unless attacked. The distances were mostly short.

In the meanwhile and in anticipation of orders, General Birdwood had worked out all his arrangements in detail.

The first step was the evacuation of the remainder of the French troops. They were in readiness withdrawn from the line on the night of January 1-2, and were to be embarked by the French warships and transports. The wind on the following night when the men and animals were to put off proved strong, and embarkation in boats not being easy some British destroyers were requisitioned to assist. The proceedings too having to be conducted in darkness and a choppy sea, a French battleship ran down and sank one of the horse transports. However, this part of the embarkation was got through without further loss.

It was then decided to fix the final withdrawal for the night of January 8. A complete shipment of the heavy guns, though ordered from London, and this weighty stuff had to go first if at all, would by inability to reply to the hostile fire have given away the intended evacuation altogether. Seven of such guns, one British and six French, were therefore retained, and at the finish destroyed.

The further preparations included, as a precaution, lines of trenches covering the several beaches. Between the front lines and the departure places there were already existing three lines of trenches, all strongly wired. These could be held if need were. To leave nothing to chance, however, a line of posts was laid out

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from de Trott's battery on the Straits to Gully Beach on the *Ægean*. To reach the beaches the enemy, if he essayed it, would have to penetrate four lines of defences, and the trenches covering the beaches as well.

At each embarkation place there was a staff of naval officers. The Naval arrangements were put into the hands of Captain C. M. Staveley, R.N.

There were not wanting evidences of a deepening of enemy suspicions. On January 7 an exceptionally heavy gunfire was directed against the right of the Allied line, both from in front and in flank from across the Dardanelles. It resulted in but few casualties, but the defences were severely knocked about. The main reply was from the ships of the supporting squadron. Two Turkish mines were sprung in the centre, where the Turkish trenches were observed to be crowded. An attack was delivered, but it had no "go" in it, and was rapidly repulsed.

These signs of activity, whatever their object, were not shown on the following day—the last which any British troops were to pass on the peninsula. The day dawned sunny and calm. A light breeze was wafted over the sea from the south. The calm spell, so the meteorological expert with the Force predicted, would last for the next twenty-four hours.

Everything for the last move was ready. The embarkations were to begin soon after darkness fell, and the men in the front line to withdraw a quarter of an hour before midnight. It was calculated that they would, if unattacked, reach the landing places about three in the morning.

The embarkation had been arranged to take place in three trips; the first comprising men withdrawn from the support line immediately after nightfall; the second most of the men left to hold the front line; the third the rearguards of the trenches covering the beaches, the Naval and Military beach working parties, and those of the Royal Engineers left ashore to execute repairs to piers if damaged. The body of men included in the first trip was larger than that included in the

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second, and these again more numerous than those included in the third.

Just after nightfall, about seven o'clock, the wind veered from south to south-west and began to freshen, and it continued to rise until close upon midnight. By that time the sea had become choppy.

Notwithstanding these conditions, the first trip was carried out without mishap. The second trip, entered upon at half-past eleven, and including the embarkation of guns as well as men, was kept well up to schedule time. At half-past three in the morning the last of the men in the third trip left shore. The history of the Gallipoli Expedition had been closed.

There were but two incidents worthy of note. One was the reported presence of an enemy submarine; the report was correct enough, for *Prince George*, having 2,000 troops on board, was struck on the way to Mudros by a torpedo. The torpedo failed to explode. The other incident was the grounding of a lighter at Gully Beach stranded owing to the heavy seas, which had already washed away the pier at W Beach. As the vessel could not be refloated the men on her, 160 in number, had to be re-landed, marched to W Beach and embarked there.

All this had taken place apparently without the enemy having taken the alarm. But as the last parties left the shore stores and supplies left behind broke out at one point after another into flame. They had been fired by time fuses. The night became illuminated by these flares. In the midst of them two magazines of munitions and explosives, which it had been impracticable to remove, went up one after another in quick succession with a roar. They had been fired in the same way.

Then it became evident that the enemy had been roused. Red lights soared up above the Turkish lines. At the same time the enemy's heavy guns boomed out. His shells were seen to be falling upon the landing places. They continued to fall as the warships and transports stood off. This bombardment of nothing in particular went on for three hours.

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The evacuation had been completely successful. Not a man had been lost. The withdrawal had been successful because General Munro had made up his mind "that no risks should be taken in prolonging the withdrawal of *personnel* at the final stage with a view to reducing the quantity of stores left"—and burned. It was a sagacious course, and there can be no doubt that it contributed to the justified confidence of all ranks, which in turn affirmed the perfect discipline displayed.

So closed this enterprise, ill-advised and ill-timed in its inception, unfortunate in its course. It had failed less from natural difficulties than from misjudgment. But against its gloomy background stand out some of the noblest examples of human courage. The British dead who fell in Gallipoli and sleep there, around them its desolate ravines and barren hills, had nobly upheld the valour of their race. The pity of it is that these deeds were turned to naught. Error bears at all times a bitter fruit, but none more bitter than in war. The error here was that which put equipment before men, not seeing that the greater perfection of destructive equipment heightens the qualities of the men who handle it; renders the element of ability and supreme ability in direction more than ever imperative. The British Empire was built up by reliance upon men. No more shining examples of duty and devotion could illumine a dark page than those of the soldiers and sailors over whose resting places might well be inscribed the epitaph, "Go tell the Lacedæmonians we lie here in obedience to their laws."

Was the campaign wholly without political results? By no means. The Turkish losses in Gallipoli were greater than those in the Balkan War. More than 100,000 of the best troops of the Empire had fallen. Added to the disastrous campaigns in the Caucasus it was a fatal blow. If the Balkan War had shaken the Turkish Empire to its foundations these combined losses, doubly severe, dried up the springs of its vitality.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SALONICA AND EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGNS OF 1916

Strategical reasons for the Allied occupation of Salonica—Belated attempt to aid Serbia—The rôle of Bulgaria—German influences at Athens—Proposed Allied junction with the Serbian army impracticable—Organisation of the Salonica position—Repulse of the Bulgarians—Situation at the beginning of 1916—Surrender of the Struma pass—Enforcement of Greek demobilisation—Formation of a Greek Provisional Government in Macedonia and the islands—Abdication of Constantine—The Allied autumn offensive of 1916—Capture of Kamakchalan and Monastir—Political and strategical consequences—The Senussi of Sollum—His hostility—War declared against him—Operations on the Western Egyptian frontier—Action at Beit Hussein—Battle of Gebel Medwa—Defeat of the Senussi's forces at Halazin—British advance upon Sollum and reoccupation of that place—The exploit of the Armoured Car Detachment—Close of the Western Egyptian campaign—Renewal of enemy attacks in Sinai—The second German-Turkish Expedition—Battle at Mahemdia.

EARLY in October, 1915, the 10th Division, under the command of Sir B. Mahon, withdrawn from Suvla, had been ordered to and had landed at Salonica. There two divisions of the French Eastern Expeditionary Force had preceded them. A third French division shortly afterwards arrived. The French troops were commanded by General Sarraill, an officer who had proved his brilliant ability in the operations round Verdun.

Events in the Balkans had dictated this step. After having, unaided, repelled two attacks by Austria, the Serbians and Montenegrins found themselves in the autumn of 1915 called upon to face, not merely a combined German-Austrian offensive, but an attack by Bulgaria. Born fighters as their peoples were, this

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ordeal was too much for minor States already severely tried in the crucible of war.

The close of 1915 was for the Allied Powers in the East the darkest hour of the conflict. Even if early enough it had been perceived that the Serbo-Greek alliance was the keystone of the political arch, both as regards the Balkans and the Levant as a whole, the course taken by the war in Russia had suddenly emphasised the importance of rendering aid to the Serbians. Certainly statesmen neither in London nor at Paris can justly be accused of failing to foresee the conduct of the Russian Minister of War, General Soukominoff, which, leaving the Russian armies without munitions, had compelled them to evacuate Poland and the Baltic Provinces. On the other hand, it had been open to Allied statesmen either to look upon the Serbo-Greek alliance as a compact merely concerning two minor States, or to view it as having a much wider ambit. The latter assuredly was the view which prevailed alike at Berlin and at Vienna and the view which guided the policy of the Central Powers. It was by no accident that the War broke out as a quarrel between Austria and Serbia. With this compact between Serbia and Greece supported and affirmed, and the eventual adhesion of Rumania assured, the Allied Powers held the diplomatic situation in the Balkans in the hollow of their hand. Though Bulgaria had entered into a treaty, supposed to be secret, with Germany and Austria, that would have mattered little given the united support of the Serbians and the Greeks.

The Allied Powers, however, had allowed King Constantine to treat the compact with Serbia as naught, and the Serbians had been left in isolation. Those proceedings, added to the advance of the German and Austrian armies in Russia and the non-success of the Allied Expedition to Gallipoli, had encouraged the ruling clique in Bulgaria, headed by Tsar Ferdinand, to throw off disguise. An attempt had been made by the British Foreign Office, in whose hands the matter had been left, to secure Bulgarian neutrality. But

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there was between the Court at Athens and that at Sofia a close understanding, and the hesitant attitude of the Allied Powers towards Constantine doomed British negotiations at Sofia to futility. When, at length, action could no longer be postponed if the Serbians were not finally to be crushed, the Allied forces in the Levant were locked up in Gallipoli. Their treaty rights gave France, Great Britain, and Russia, as Guardian Powers, authority to land troops upon Greek territory should it be threatened. Evidently by a defeat of Serbia it might be. They availed themselves therefore of their authority to send troops to Salonica.

The instructions to the Salonica force were to advance into Serbia and open up communication with the Serbian army, and there was apparently an agreement with the Greek Government that if such a junction proved to be impracticable the Allied troops were to be withdrawn. The junction intended did prove to be impracticable, and on several grounds. In the first place, the arrival of the Allied troops at Salonica was for such a purpose belated. By that time, after a resistance which for sheer heroism has never been surpassed, the Serbians had been overwhelmed. During two months they had struggled against impossible odds. The aid of the greater Allied Powers was not forthcoming until the last stage of this unequal conflict. By then those of the Serbians who had survived it—scorning to lay down their arms—the fathers with their boys by their side—were tramping the long miles over the mountains towards the Adriatic amid the rigours of a Balkan winter. They were all that was left of the flower and manhood of their nation.

The proposed junction with the Serbians again was impracticable because the three French divisions told off to effect it were totally insufficient. The single weak British Division transferred to Salonica had assigned to it the duty of covering the French right while the operation of pushing up the valley of the Vardar was being carried out. But the chief function of the Bulgarians in this Balkan campaign had been to thrust in

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between the Serbians and Salonica. The line of the Vardar is long, and to attempt to hold it against hostile forces at least three times as numerous was out of the question.

Here once more there had been uncertainty. If a mistake had been made in embarking prematurely upon the Expedition to Gallipoli in place of throwing troops into Serbia by way of Salonica, which might have been done at the outset of the war and might have saved the Serbo-Greek compact, discouraging the intrigues at Athens at the same time, another mistake was now committed in withdrawing so much of the Dardanelles Force to Egypt. Both these mistakes had arisen from an exaggerated estimate of the capacity of the Turks to attack that Protectorate. The original plea put forward for the Expedition to Gallipoli had been that it would divert such a Turkish attack. Adequate and timely support of the Serbians, however, would have done more to limit Turkish resources, and to hasten the issue of the Eastern campaigns than any other measure. No sufficient consideration seems to have been given to the difficulty confronting any force having to cross the Sinai desert without command of the sea. It was supposed that this difficulty might be overcome by means of rail transit. But Turkey, isolated, was utterly unequal to any enterprise of the kind, and the main problem clearly was to isolate Turkey. The Expedition to Gallipoli was the wrong way of attacking the problem. It was the worst possible strategy. Allowing themselves to be impressed by reports of the 250,000 Turkish troops massed at Damascus for the purposes of an expedition against Egypt, the British Cabinet, though a vigorous effort even at the eleventh hour might have changed the situation in the Balkans, had let Serbia go.

But though belated, the landing of an Allied force at Salonica had important results both politically and strategically. It prevented hostile troops from seizing the great port ; by occupying and diverting the enemy's attention it rendered feasible the re-equipment of what

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was left of the Serbian army, transferred for that purpose from the mainland to Corfu; not least, it altered radically the situation which from this time confronted the predominant pro-German clique at Athens. To all intents the free Constitution of Greece, set up under the ægis of the Guardian Powers, had been suspended. If in name still a Constitutional ruler, Constantine had become, in fact, absolute. The Greek Ministry had been reduced to his puppets. There had appeared the political phenomenon, already familiar in the history of Prussia during the first half of the nineteenth century, of a nominal Cabinet possessing only the shadow of authority, and of a secret and unavowed Court Council exercising all the actual functions of Government.

And the manner in which those functions were exercised left not the slightest doubt as to the Secret Council's aims. Under the mask of neutrality, neutral rights being insisted upon to the uttermost, there were maintained and encouraged hidden bases for German submarine warfare; there was an active and unchecked smuggling of arms, munitions, and military stores across from Greece to the North African coast in preparation of an Arab rising and an attack upon Egypt from the west; the Greek army had been mobilised, ostensibly as a measure of national security, but the real purpose was the less in doubt because, though kept on a supposed war footing, the Greek troops were rendered as far as possible valueless. They were ill-supplied; their pay was in arrear, or not forthcoming; their discipline neglected. They were allowed to become more and more ragged and dirty, and their arms out of condition. The authority of officers was undermined both by propaganda and by false or exaggerated reports destructive of *moral*; the officers, uncertain and bewildered, lost self-respect. And coincidentally with this deliberate erosion, a strange procedure on the part of a king bred to the profession of arms, there were formed at Athens and elsewhere the clubs of so-called Nationalists or Volunteers, the advertised object to protect the country from

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aggression, the actual design to overawe the majority opposed to the casting of Greek nationality into the Central European melting pot. This movement, originated and kept up by a corruption fund, was purely factitious. It was an organisation of all the idle blackguardism of the populace, more especially in the capital.

While immediately after their landing in October part of the British 10th Division were sent forward from Salonica to relieve the French troops holding the front from Kosturino to Lake Doiran, it was speedily realised that a movement up the valley of the Vardar, which that relief had been intended to assist, would merely be incurring a strategic risk for no useful end. In the circumstances, the task of linking up with the Serbians, besides being already impracticable, had become secondary to that of watching the northern frontier of Greece.

The first duty which fell to the British troops under the command of General Mahon was that of organisation, and preparation for the landing of reinforcements. An enemy thrust at Salonica was to be anticipated, and the Greek Government could not for a moment be depended upon. Assuredly the state of things which confronted General Mahon might well have discouraged any save a determined commander. There is a road from Salonica north-east to Seres, but it was in bad repair. There is a railway which serpentine through the hills from Salonica northwards to Lake Doiran, but it was a single track only, and in bad repair also. For the rest, the surrounding country was, broadly speaking, chaos, marked by undrained and festering swamps, the breeding places of malaria; the ordinary roads just unpaved tracks. A depth of official neglect and hugger-mugger only to be met with in the Levant was written large upon the landscape. In order to establish a fortified base large enough to accommodate an important force, it was advisable in the meanwhile to employ the French and British divisions already on the spot as covering troops, and very wisely Sir Charles

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Munro, with his habitual caution, promptly so decided. It may have disappointed, and doubtless did disappoint, the public expectations of an advance into Serbia, but it assured larger and still practicable things. It was the first step towards making good past errors.

Not only had roads to be made and swamps to be drained, but accommodation had to be provided alike for the troops expected, for stores, and for sick and wounded. Order had to be evolved, and by hard work the face of the area occupied was steadily changed. To this activity General Munro in his despatches paid a well-earned tribute. The first Allied divisions sent to Salonica in the hope of pushing up the valley of the Vardar had been dispatched so hurriedly that they were not only destitute of a full transport equipment, but most of the units were without first line transport. Operations as a fully equipped force being out of the question, they had to be converted into mobile columns, that is on a semi-guerilla footing. That was done with remarkable expedition. At the same time, the prospective landing of reinforcements at Salonica had to be provided for. The storage space available in the port was inadequate; the lack of roads a great handicap; but by the resolution of General Mahon and his staff these obstacles were bit by bit overcome, and the clean, smartly attired British officers and men introduced into the life of the city a new energising element.

Nor were such preparations taken in hand a moment too soon. The main Allied reinforcements were landed at the beginning of December, their disembarkation much facilitated by the work already got through. This was fortunate, for two reasons. To begin with, in the attempt to push forward into Serbia in light order, and despite the Balkan winter, the covering troops had suffered acutely from cold. It is well known that between the coastal region forming their southern glacis and the Macedonian highlands representing the tumbled plateau north of the main mountain range, the difference in temperature during the winter months is extreme. The winter climate of the coastal zone is

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comparatively mild ; that of the highlands very severe. Often in the highlands the temperature falls to zero Fahrenheit, or below it. But besides these severities, intelligence left it certain that a large German-Bulgarian force was being concentrated in the Strumnitza valley for the purpose of making a thrust towards Salonica and cutting the communications of the Allied Covering Troops with that place. The thrust was anticipated. It proved too late to cut in as had been intended, but not too late to attack the Covering Force during its retirement. The brunt of this three days' battle, on December 6, 7, and 8, fell upon the British troops, who were holding the Allied right. Repulsing a superior force of Bulgarians, they extricated themselves from a by no means easy position with inconsiderable losses. So decided had been the repulse inflicted, that their retreat was not further opposed.

With apparently no slight confidence it had been announced from Berlin that Salonica would be occupied by the German-Bulgarian troops, and the Allies driven out by the beginning of January, 1916. The attempt to press down the Vardar was made, and it failed. And in face alike of the Allied reinforcements, and of the difficulties of active campaigning in the Balkans in winter, the attempt was bound to fail. From that time the Allied grip upon the Salonica position solidified. This was a heavy blow to German and Austrian schemes, not merely because Salonica is the main commercial route between Central Europe and the Levant, but because of the check imposed upon the intrigues at Athens.

The general situation during the earlier months of 1916 was this. On the extreme right the districts of Seres and Drama, added to Greece after the Balkan Wars, were occupied by Greek troops, and in their hands was the pass through the mountains formed by the gorge of the Struma. At Stavros on the Strymon Gulf began the fortified lines of the British position, extending across the neck of the Chalkidike peninsula north-west to the Galiko river, and then to Lake Doiran.

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At Lake Doiran began the French lines which were continued as far as the Vardar, and covered its lower reaches on the west.

In the meanwhile, and as the re-equipment of the Serbian army proceeded, the political situation in Greece became more acute. The activities of the so-called Nationalists grew more openly terrorist. The political agitation in the Greek army, too, went on, and that once brilliant force showed itself increasingly demoralised and dissatisfied. In May, when General G. F. Milne took over the command of the British contingent of the Salonica army, occurred the episode of the surrender of the Struma Pass by the Greek troops holding it, the irruption of the Bulgarians into the eastern districts of Grecian Macedonia, and the withdrawal of the Greek forces there after one army corps had, so it was reported, taken service with the Central Powers. These events, added to the massing in Thessaly of troops supposed to be supporters of Constantine, the accumulation of munitions and stores in that province, and the difficulties placed in the way of the transport of the re-armed Serbians over Greek territory, moved the Guardian Powers at length to insist upon a Greek demobilisation. The demand, met by dilatory tactics, had to be enforced by an ultimatum. French troops landed at Athens to give effect to the requirement of the Allied Powers that the Greek telegraphs and railways should be placed under their control, and the clubs disarmed, were attacked. The demobilisation was enforced in July. One immediate effect of this more decided attitude of the Great Allied Powers had been in June a revolt of the northern provinces and the islands from the Athens Government, and the formation of a Provisional Authority. At the same time, steps were initiated for raising in the seceding territories a Greek army of 80,000 men. Constantine, by these various measures, was rendered powerless. In December he abdicated, and the Crown Prince of Greece being excluded from the succession by the act of abdication, the King was replaced on the throne by his second son,

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Prince Alexander. The Serbian troops were transported from Corfu to Salonica.

The political difficulties, however, had consumed the greater part of the summer, and it was not until August, their rear now freed from menace, that, reinforced by the Serbians, 70,000 strong, the combined force under the command of General Sarrail could enter upon offensive operations. In the interim fresh obstacles had arisen. The British right was now exposed to a Bulgarian menace, and the enemy by a powerfully supported forward movement on the west had established himself in the bend of the Cerna, and had seized and fortified the commanding height of Kamakchalan, north of Lake Ostrova.

Westwards from Salonica a line of railway runs to Monastir. After crossing just above the delta of the Vardar, it is carried through Vodena and from that place in line with the one practicable road of the region, passes between the northern end of Lake Ostrova and the Kamakchalan mountain. The latter, a flat-topped eminence with precipitous and cliff-like sides, dominates the road and railway, the lake and all the country to the south, and there is no other way to Monastir save by a détour of the lake over stiff hilly country impracticable, owing to the absence of roads, for all save the lightest of military transport. On the other hand, by the capture of this dominating position the Allied forces would be able to assault with some prospect of success the very elaborate trench system established by the enemy across the Cerna valley south of Monastir. The taking of Kamakchalan would afford the purchase for a flank attack. The plan of General Sarrail was by the capture of Monastir to turn the enemy's right, and it was, in fact, the feasible plan in the circumstances.

In conformity with that plan the British forces at the beginning of August took over the French positions south and west of Lake Doiran, and entered upon a series of attacks upon the Bulgarian line designed to prevent the transfer of hostile forces to the Monastir sector. A joint Anglo-French offensive against the

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centre of the enemy's front, launched on August 10, won some notable successes. While the French captured Hill 227 and La Tortue, the British took the features of the main range named by the troops Kidney Hill and Horseshoe Hill. These captures, while weakening the enemy's centre, strengthened ours, and obliged the Bulgarians here to stiffen their forces. It enabled the British force to be employed to hold the Allied centre as well as the right as they had been doing, and it will be seen that the effect was at once to add to the troops available for the proposed main movement, while diminishing those the enemy could dispose of to resist it. Of course coincidentally with the extension of the length of the British line the Bulgarian counter-pressure on the east from Demir Hissar and Seres was increased, and was met by a succession of operations across the Struma. Thanks to the British superiority in guns among other things, these activities were decidedly successful. Armoured motor cars were effectively employed, and the Royal Flying Corps proved a valuable co-operation. A number of villages were captured and held against strong Bulgarian counter-attacks, very expensive to the enemy. These operations, ably directed by Lieut.-General C. J. Briggs, further occupied a not inconsiderable part of the hostile strength.

Into the details of the main operations it is beyond present scope to enter, except to say that by a feat of daring which has rarely been surpassed the Serbians, who fought magnificently, took Kamakchalan by storm, swarming up the chimneys and gullies of its seemingly unscalable sides, and notwithstanding a desperate defence, sweeping it bare of the enemy. Kamakchalan taken, they drove the Bulgarians over the valley beyond, and winning a firm footing on the massif east of Monastir contributed materially to the fortunate outcome of the attack by the French which broke through the maze of trenches on the flat and led to the retaking of Monastir. Beyond this the offensive was not pushed, for in truth its chief immediate purpose had been achieved. Through Monastir lies the main

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landward route from Macedonia into Greece. By the capture of Monastir that route had been closed. At the same time it had become practicable to co-operate with the Italians from Valona.

It will have been gathered from this outline of events in the Balkans that there was between those events and the campaigns in Egypt an underlying connection. During 1916 there were campaigns in Egypt, both in Sinai and west of the Nile. The latter had been fed by traffic through Greece, and it was not until the closing of the Monastir route that the possibility of that traffic was cut off. The taking of Monastir was secondary only in importance to the occupation of Salonica itself. Cutting the landward communication of Germany with Greece, it dried up at their source those interests, avowed and unavowed, which from thence had derived vitality.

But while possibilities remained open, as they did during the whole of 1915 and part of the following year, and so long as fat though speculative profits were to be made, it would have been altogether foreign to the established characteristics of the Levant if material encouragement for a so-called Holy War in Northern Africa had not been forthcoming.

West of the Nile valley, its northern slopes close to the coast, there is a vast plateau, ranging in height between 500 and 600 feet. Along its southern edge extends a series of oases running very nearly from south-east to north-west. These dispersed spots of fertility mark the natural boundary between the plateau and the boundless waterless and trackless inland sea of sand dunes to the south—the Libyan Desert as it is called in maps. The Arab tribes inhabiting the plateau and the oases acknowledge in a loose way the authority of the Senussi of Sollum, that authority, however, being more religious than political. Equally in a loose way, the Senussi of Sollum was politically a dependent of the Egyptian Government. The suzerainty consisted chiefly of imposing on the Senussi responsibility for keeping the tribes under his authority in order.

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That his fanaticism and that of his followers should be played upon, and that he should be stirred up by presents of arms and munitions, gifts these tribesmen of the desert cannot resist, to declare a Jihad against the Infidel, was not one of the possibilities merely, but one of the probabilities. Signs of unrest began to appear as early as May, 1915. They proved to be due to the intrigues of Nuri Bey, a half-brother of Enver Pasha, and those of Gaafer Pasha. Nuri had been sent to Tripoli to open up negotiations with the Senussi, but he appears to have met with little success, for he had nothing to offer at Sollum save promises and persuasions. In due course, however, there arrived Gaafer Pasha, who backed the promises with arms and money. Gaafer was a German turned Moslem. Then affairs began to wear a different look. Outwardly and for some months the Senussi remained friendly, but in November, 1915, a succession of incidents on the frontier and on the coast left it certain that preparations had been made for war, and accordingly war was declared.

To reach Sollum from the Nile there are two routes : that along the narrow fringe of coast country north of the plateau, and that through the oases. In the Behera province of Egypt is an Arab population of some 120,000 who acknowledge the Senussi's religious headship. In order to prevent these tribesmen from raiding the cultivated country between the plateau and the Nile, it was judged the best course for the time being to draw in and concentrate the frontier posts, secure the nearer oases, and wait for the opportunity to strike at Sollum by sea. The town lies in the innermost recess of a bay surrounded on both sides by lofty hills. It had been occupied by a small British garrison of 109 men, but in view of the attitude of the tribesmen the garrison was on November 23 withdrawn by sea. Meanwhile, for frontier operations there was formed at Alexandria a force consisting of a Composite Mounted Brigade and a Composite Infantry Brigade ; the former (Brigadier-General Tyndale Briscoe in command) made up of three regiments of yeomanry, one regiment of the Australian

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Light Horse, and a battery of the Royal Horse Artillery, the latter—under Brigadier-General Lord Lucan—of four battalions (1/6th Royal Scots, 2/7th and 2/8th Middlesex, and 15th Sikhs). Both brigades had the Service equipment of mobile troops. The command was given to Major-General A. Wallace. Other troops, including camelry, were dispatched to occupy the oases.

Various brushes with the forces of the Senussi took place. Among the sharpest was that near Beit Hussein on December 13. A small flying column was sent out to disperse a body of tribesmen reported by aerial reconnaissance. Led by Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Gordon, the column was formed of 350 men of the 15th Sikhs; three squadrons of the 2nd Yeomanry; the Notts Battery, R.H.A.; six naval armoured cars, and one wireless car. The opposing force was found to be some 1,200 strong with machine-guns and two field pieces. They had taken up a position, well chosen, along the slopes of a dry watercourse, the Wadi Shaifa. Retreating from that position and waiting until the British had crossed, they suddenly turned, and attempted by outflanking to drive Gordon's men back into the ravine. For a time the situation looked critical, but the arrival in support of two squadrons of the Australian Light Horse on the outside of the hostile arc broke it, and enabled the British charging home to roll it up. This combat was characteristic of the campaign.

Another but more severe reverse was inflicted on the Senussi's men on December 25, more severe because they numbered this time some 5,000 and were commanded by Gaafer Pasha. On the report of the concentration within striking distance of the British advanced base at Matruh, General Wallace formed his force into two columns, the right consisting of the infantry screened by horse (the Royal Bucks Hussars) the left of the mounted men only. The guns (R.H.A.) were distributed part to each column, and the plan was to work round the enemy's right flank, the more mobile (left) column driving the hostile troops, mostly Senussi

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regulars, on to the British infantry. The action took place at Gebel Medwa, on the coast.

On the appearance of the British force the enemy retired towards the northern edge of the plateau and took up a position on a crest, beyond which, leading down to sea level, were various broad gullies. An assault upon the rising ground, the main position, was delivered by the Sikhs and New Zealanders. In the meanwhile, the Mounted Column, having ridden round to the south-west and defeated a body of horse covering the enemy's flank, pushed north towards the coast along the depression known as the Wadi Majid. The object, of course, was to cut off the enemy's retreat, for part of the British infantry column, the crest having been won, were engaged in driving the hostile force down the gullies coastwards. Gafer's men, seeing the danger of being entrapped, thereupon broke into small detachments, and in that manner most slipped away westward along the coast route before the British horse could close the exit. But they lost heavily, and were obliged to abandon a large amount of ammunition, besides many camels and herds of cattle, their chief means of subsistence.

A third battle took place on January 22. The hostile forces, regathered, again advanced towards Matruh, accompanied on this expedition by a number of German and Turkish officers and by the Grand Senussi in person, evidently to give faith to his followers and the assurance that with the Prophet among them they must be victorious. Like the others, the purpose of this expedition was to break through and ravage the cultivated lands, the old practice of the Bedouin. No action was taken on the British side until the arrival from Alexandria of a battalion of the South African Infantry Brigade. During the interval the enemy had encamped at Halazen, 25 miles south-west of Matruh. Hostile movements were reported by aerial reconnaissance, which had altered the conditions of desert campaigning radically.

The British force was again formed into two columns,

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left under the command of Briscoe, the cavalry ; right under the command of Gordon, the infantry, consisting of the 2/8th Middlesex, the New Zealanders, South Africans and Sikhs, who were to carry out the chief attack. It was now the rainy season, and although rain never falls in the Nile valley or in Sinai, this western plateau is swept in January by rainstorms of tropical violence. One of these had recently been experienced, so that the wadis and gullies had become the beds of foaming torrents, and great patches of the plateau temporary swamps. Taking advantage of this state of things, the enemy had occupied at Bir Shola, 16 miles from Matruh, a position having at a distance of some three miles in front of it a long tract of swampy land. Opposing the British advance round this bad patch with a vanguard supported by machine-guns and artillery, he gradually fell back upon his battle position. The plan of General Wallace was to hold him with the British mounted troops while Gordon's force fell upon his left flank. The enemy, however, had also a turning movement of his own on hand on the opposite wing—the *British* left—and he attempted at the same time, being superior in numbers, to outflank Gordon. Both manœuvres were skilful in design, but both failed in the execution, for although the British force had had a trying march over heavy country, these onsets were defeated, with the result that the Senussi was obliged to abandon his camp, which the British occupied, destroying a large accumulation of stores. Such a misfortune with the Senussi on the ground played havoc with the Bedouin *moral*.

To complete this brief sketch of the Western Egyptian campaign, it may be added that in March, 1916, Sollum was re-occupied by a British Expeditionary Force. General Sir John Maxwell, who had in the meantime taken over the command in Egypt, decided, after weighing the alternatives, to advance to that place by way of the oases. One reason for that decision was that the enemy, defeated in his attempts to break into Egypt by the northern route, had been spreading

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eastward along the southern edge of the plateau. To assist aerial reconnaissance over the immense distances to be covered, a system of advanced air depots in the desert was established. The suggestion, originating with Captain van Rynfeld, R.F.C., and Mr. Jennings Bramley, of the Sudan Civil Service, proved of great utility.

Owing no doubt to the smuggling that went on, the enemy, commanded by Gaafer, was better supplied with machine-guns and artillery than in the earlier part of the campaign, and his plan was evidently to fight from oasis to oasis, delivering counter-attacks and carrying out enveloping movements wherever possible. The British Expedition was under the command of General Peyton. Its advance was steady, but sure. On February 26 the enemy was defeated at Agagia by General Lukin. Two days later, Barrani (50 miles east of Sollum) was occupied. The hostile force, in retreat upon Sollum, had begun rapidly to melt owing to desertions.

From Barrani Sollum can be reached by the Khedivial road running north-east until it strikes the coast, or by a route across the plateau westwards. It was the latter route Gaafer and his men had taken, and, notwithstanding the water problem, it was decided to follow him up. With that view, the Expeditionary Force was disposed into two columns; one formed of the infantry and heavier transport; the other of the cavalry and camelry, with the mounted guns. The latter column was to push on to Augerin, where there was reported to be a supply of water; the former to make good a footing on the plateau towards Sollum. When, however, Augerin was reached, on March 12, the reports as to water proved to be exaggerated. At best the supply found was sufficient for a portion only of the troops. General Peyton therefore decided to move his infantry by way of the coast while General Lukin with the mounted men only pushed on by the inland road. On the morning of March 14, the two columns having reunited near Bagbag, within striking distance of

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Sollum, closed in. It had been expected that the enemy would offer battle on the heights before the town. No longer, however, in a situation to resist, he was discovered by the airmen retreating west with his artillery. The armoured cars, under the command of Major the Duke of Westminster, were sent off in pursuit. The result was the capture of all the hostile guns, and the whole of the machine-gun equipment. Sollum was reoccupied.

From prisoners it was learned that the crews of H.M.S. *Tara*, and H.M.T. *Moorina*, both torpedoed off the coast during November, 1915, were held in captivity 75 miles west of Sollum. They had been made prisoners on landing. Without delay the armoured car detachment were hurried to the rescue. Though the country was quite unknown the distance was covered in a few hours, the force guarding the captured sailors surprised and routed, and the rescue completely successful. The commander of the detachment and his men received a special mention in despatches.

Coincidentally with the campaign on the west, the military authorities in Egypt had to deal with that on the east.

After the ill-success of the attack in Sinai in February, 1915—an enterprise which had incidentally revealed the formidable difficulties of the undertaking—the Turks in that region confined themselves to desultory fighting. They still ranged over the peninsula east of the Suez Canal, and from time to time there were brushes with the British mounted patrols and other troops, but it was not until July, 1916, that a second serious attack was undertaken. No doubt that season, supposed to be impracticable for campaigning, in such a region, was chosen because it was hoped that the effort would prove a surprise. It did not.

In January, 1916, the command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force had been transferred from Sir John Maxwell to Sir Archibald Murray. The special duty of this Force at the time was the protection of the

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Canal. Egypt was also a training ground for the Overseas troops in passage there.

Probably now, looking back, it may be judged that too large a strength was kept immobilised for a merely defensive function, and beyond doubt this political nervousness hampered operations alike in Mesopotamia and in the Balkans. Sir Archibald Murray records that in January, 1916, "though his (the enemy's) new means of communication in Southern Syria and Sinai, commenced with a view to an attack upon the Suez Canal, were still in a backward state, he undoubtedly had at his disposal the troops, amounting to 250,000 men or more, necessary to such an attack." Most likely this intelligence was true, but in this instance communications were the core of the problem, not numbers. A quarter of a million men at Damascus were a very different proposition from a quarter of a million men on the Suez Canal, and the greater the number necessary the greater the enigma of their transport. It was not merely ten times more difficult to transport 25,000 than 250,000. Under the conditions it was a hundred times more difficult. In fact, without command of the sea it was impossible.

The Hedjaz railway from Damascus to Mecca having been laid down before the war, there was apparently a belief at Constantinople that the obstacles to the transit of a very large force across Sinai might be overcome by the laying down of light railways and the establishment of depots en route. And no doubt they could have been were the command of the sea ensured, or even had there been no risk of attack or diversion by sea, though in the latter case the scheme was the less easy. The Germans, however, could assure neither of these conditions. What they thought they might rely upon was British lack of military boldness and failure to exploit the advantages of sea supremacy. In any event, the scheme for a time hung fire, for after the fall of Erzerum the concentration of troops at Damascus had to be drawn upon until it was reported to have been reduced to a total of 60,000 men only. This

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seems to have been considered a proportional reduction of the menace to Egypt. In truth it was nothing of the kind.

One of the first steps taken by the British in 1916 was the occupation of the district Quatia and the construction of a railway to that place. Geographically this district, at the northern end of the Canal, is part of the Nile delta, and though little cultivated, affords sufficient water from wells for a considerable body of troops. It was on that account advisable to occupy it in force. In April, when the railway was nearing completion, only seven miles of line not being yet laid down, the Turks raided Quatia in strength, and there was some severe fighting. Several British posts having been driven in or wiped out, Quatia was attacked by the enemy on April 22. The Turks were some 2,500 strong, and the garrison only a squadron of the Gloucester Yeomanry. General Wiggin, in command of a column of yeomanry, forthwith advanced to its relief, but, unfortunately, not in time enough to prevent the capture of the place. An incident of this fighting was the gallant defence of the British post at Dueidar, held by 100 men of the 5th Royal Scots Fusiliers under the command of Captain Roberts. Handling his men with conspicuous skill against the heaviest odds, Captain Roberts beat off two heavy attacks, though delivered with the utmost determination, and held out until relief arrived in the form of the 4th Royal Scots Fusiliers (Major Thompson). The Turks, counter-attacked, were totally defeated and pursued by the 5th Australian Light Horse, who had come up during the engagement. Very brilliant service was, during this fighting, rendered by the Royal Flying Corps. They attacked the Turkish camps at Bir-el-Abd and Bir-el-Bayud with conspicuous effect. Quatia was reoccupied.

During May there were minor operations only, but from reports received the enemy was again concentrating forces in Sinai. As a precautionary measure, it was resolved to drain the pools and rock cisterns in the Wadi um Muksheib, 40 miles to the south-east of

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Ismailia. The work was carried out by detachments of engineers, covered by a column of Australian Light Horse, and the Bikanir Camel Corps. It occupied from June 10 to June 14. The force, under the direction of Lieut.-Colonel T. J. Todd, worked night and day.

For a considerable time the British railhead east of the canal had been at Oghratina, seven miles from Quatia, and there was no Turkish force nearer than Bir-el-Mazor, 18 miles to the east. But on the 18th and 19th July apparently a Turkish force some 9,000 strong moved westward from El Arish, and was ascertained by an air reconnaissance on the evening of July 19 to be occupying a front from Bir-el-Abd to Bir-el-Bayud. Next day this force advanced to Oghratina, which the British were compelled to evacuate. The hostile column was discovered to be the 3rd Turkish Division, provided with mountain guns, special machine-gun companies, and heavy artillery; the heavy guns manned by Germans and Austrians, and the machine-gun companies under German officers. According to the information given by prisoners, the 3rd Division was only the advance guard of a larger body of troops one day's march behind them. The 3rd Division was accompanied by a body of Arab camelry commanded by Colonel Kress von Kressenstein. The equipment, including wireless sections and field hospitals, had, it was afterwards found, been schemed out in Germany for desert campaigning.

This Turkish Expedition hugged the coast, and the British measures were a bombardment by monitors of the hostile trenches and camps and a harrying by mobile and mounted troops of the enemy's left flank and rear.

For some days the expected attack failed to develop, but on August 3 it had become apparent that there would be a thrust between Romani and Mahemdia on the coast. To check this a line of British outposts had been established. On August 4 the outpost line was attacked. Although the first assault was beaten off, the line was driven in. By now the hostile plan was clear; it was to shell with the heavy guns from the east

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the fortified line defending the Canal and at the same time to assault it in flank from the south.

The total enemy strength engaged was some 18,000 men.

General Lawrence, commandant of the British troops, had determined to meet the southern attack, delivered by the main body of the Turkish infantry, with a counter-stroke against their left flank and rear. Held back until the impetus of the Turkish assault had spent itself against the fortified line, and then suddenly launched from amid the screen of the sand dunes with a powerful backing of mounted men, the counter-thrust was completely successful, and the Turkish defeat decisive. In the pursuit, continued for three days, 4,000 of the enemy were rounded up. Captures of equipment included a heavy Krupp gun, a battery of mountain guns, with accessories, machine-guns with mountings for camel transport, 2,300 rifles, a million rounds of rifle and machine-gun ammunition, 500 camels, 100 horses and mules, a large amount of miscellaneous stores, and two field hospitals. The enemy casualties in the action were some 5,000 men. Thus ended the second attempt upon the Canal, an even more unfortunate enterprise than the first.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE RECAPTURE OF KUT AND THE TAKING OF BAGDAD

Sir Stanley Maude appointed to the Mesopotamia Command—Decides upon an offensive—Reasons for it—The preparations—British Staff and Administrative work—Improvement of the River Transport and other Services—Movement of Reinforcements up the Tigris—Enemy's counter-measures—Strength of the defences round Kut—Maude's strategy—British cross the Shatt-el-Hai—Threat to the Turkish right-rear—Bombardment at Sanna-i-yat—Enemy defences east of the Hai captured—Defences astride of the Hai stormed—Assault on the Dahri bend defences—British attacks at Sanna-i-yat—Enemy's dilemma—Capture of the Shumran bend, the key of Kut—Turks evacuate the town—The British pursuit—Destruction of the enemy's river flotilla—British advance to Zana—Advance to Ctesiphon—The Diala reached, March 7, 1917—Change in British tactics—The defence out-maneuvred—Bagdad railway terminus occupied—Crossing of the Diala—Turkish retreat—British entry into Bagdad (March 11)—Turkish defensive crippled.

SIR PERCY LAKE remained in command of the Expeditionary Force in Mesopotamia until August, 1916. From the fall of Kut until that date operations were both of a minor character and in the main defensive. Neither the numerical strength nor the health of the troops allowed of much beyond the work or regularising the occupation of the wide territory now under British control. In addition to the vilayet of Basra it embraced the region of the lower Euphrates.

In August the command was transferred to Sir Stanley Maude. At the outbreak of the War Maude was on the Staff of the 5th Division. Joining the Army in 1884 with a commission in the Coldstream Guards, he had

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seen service in the Soudan, and also in the Boer War, where he won the D.S.O. From 1901 he had filled various Staff appointments. In command of the 14th Infantry Brigade in the British Expeditionary Force sent to France in September, 1914, he fought at Mons, and in the retreat, was sent home severely wounded, but happily recovered. Promoted on recovery to the rank of Major-General he was given the command of the 13th Division, and with them took part in the operations in Gallipoli. It was the work and efficiency of his division in the efforts to relieve Kut which marked him out as a commander of genius.

Surveying the situation in Mesopotamia when the responsibility for it devolved upon him, General Maude perceived that the enemy's plan was for the time being to contain the British forces on the Tigris and coincidentally to develop in Persia an offensive designed to reduce that country to a dependency. Between the two courses of defence and attack which might in the circumstances be followed on the British side, the first, owing alike to the extent of territory to be covered and the conflicting interests which demanded protection, meant such a dispersal of forces that the resistance must be passive. On that ground General Maude rejected it. The true solution of the problem, he decided, was attack. A resolute offensive entered upon with concentrated forces and carried on with energy would threaten Bagdad, and Bagdad was the centre from which the enemy's operations were conducted alike in Persia and in Mesopotamia. Successful, this stroke would react both on the hostile activities in Persia and in the region of the Euphrates.

But if the true solution of the problem was attack, as undoubtedly it was, then all the more necessary was it to ensure that attack should not fail. To his preparations for the offensive General Maude devoted three and a half months. Nor was the interval too long. The health of the troops had to be improved, and their training taken in hand. Communications, still precarious, had to be made efficient, and the transport

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question dealt with. Sufficient reserves of supplies and munitions also had to be massed and got up to the front. Among other organisation work, Sir Percy Lake, with results now to prove of the highest value, had given his attention to the conversion of Basra into a suitable military port and base. Railways had been laid down; steps taken to check the effects of the inundations which in the spring of every year spread over the lowlands bordering the Shatt-el-Arab; river transport was placed under a permanent directorate; and other directorates created for Port Administration and Conservancy, Works, Railways, Supply, and Ordnance. For these experienced men had been sent out, and at the same time additional river-craft. The foundation laid had been solid. Yet another directorate created had been that of Local Resources. Under a just administration and with a properly guided distribution Mesopotamia was capable of furnishing not inconsiderable supplies and of thus relieving overseas transport. The means of distribution, an advantage alike to the inhabitants and the army, had been wanting. They were now organised. At the same time the Medical Service was strengthened and the hospital accommodation enlarged. Coincidentally the Remount and Veterinary Services were overhauled and improved.

The revision extended to the Army. General Maude regrouped his formations, saw that each unit had its proper establishment, and tuned up the Staff. With characteristic thoroughness he went into the question of communications, knowing their primary importance. The defences of lines already existent were recast and further lines for administrative purposes opened up so that they might not interfere with those of the strictly Expeditionary operations. As supplemental also to the river service, the land transport attendant upon the Force was made more complete by the provision alike of animals and of vehicles. In brief, the three and a half months taken up were a period of incessant activity. It is not work which bulks largely in the public eye, and seldom receives mention in debates or newspapers, but

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its effects are enduring. Not more remarkable than the soundness of General Maude's judgment on the main issues was his grasp of detail. Personally he did not spare himself. He visited every point where direct inspection and inquiry were advisable, and assured himself that the machinery was both completed and in good working order. Taking no risks, he toured on the one side to Ahwaz, and on the other to Nazariyeh.

In November reinforcements had begun to move up the Tigris from Basra, accompanied by the needed equipment and stores. At the end of that month the Force which was to strike the intended blow at Kut had been concentrated above Sheik Saad. The Army in Mesopotamia was at the top of its form.

On his side the enemy had not wholly been idle. He appears, however, to have acted upon the belief that a British offensive in Mesopotamia had, after the loss of Kut, been indefinitely suspended, and, occupied chiefly with the campaign in Persia, had contented himself on the Tigris with stiffening his defences. It was a perfectly just view that his aim, pending the issue of the Persian campaign, was to contain the British, and it could not be doubted, accepting these premisses, that, successful in the Persian campaign, and opening up by that means a menace to the British positions in the Farther East, he intended then to turn with all his resources upon Mesopotamia. A powerfully delivered anticipatory blow was at once the surest and quickest way of wrecking that scheme.

On two grounds the Germans and Turks considered the defences of Kut to be impregnable. The failure of the British attacks upon the Sanna-i-yat position in April had demonstrated its strength. In the meanwhile, the position had been further elaborated. Not only were there six successive lines of entrenchments between the Tigris and the Suweikiya Marsh, but other defences had been made extending back as far as Kut itself, a distance of fifteen miles. It was an extraordinary maze. And on the other side of Kut was the Shumran bend, held also to be uncapturable, covered as it was by

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a bridgehead position on the right (or southern) bank of the river. This bridgehead had been strengthened, in the first instance by a line of outer defences extending north-east to south-west from the Tigris to the Shatt-el-Hai, cutting off the Khadairi bend. Crossing the Shatt-el-Hai two miles from its confluence with the Tigris, the outer line struck then north-west, reaching the great river again opposite the end of the Shumran bend. It may here be observed that the several bends, taking them on the way upstream, were the Khadairi (right bank), the Kut peninsula (left bank), the Dahra (right bank) and the Shumran (left bank). But besides the outer defences there was on the south side of the Tigris an inner system, divided into three sections any one of which might be held independently of the others, or any two independently of the third. They were, east of the Hai, the works in the Khadairi bend ; a central position astride of the Hai, and the works west of the Hai in the Dahra bend. The works on the right bank of the river and those on the left bank were linked up by two pontoon bridges, one near the mouth of the Shatt-el-Hai, the other on the east side of the Shumran peninsula. It is not surprising that the enemy thought himself secure.

On weighing up the situation, however, General Maude saw that strategically its advantages were in his favour. To begin with, if he attacked the position at Sanna-i-yat he could do so without being in turn exposed to any counter-assault on his right flank, for the great extent of the Suweikiya Marsh imposed a long *détour*. It was open to him therefore to demonstrate against those defences with perfect safety on his own side. Next he seized upon the fact that if he struck on the right bank of the river and could establish himself on the Shatt-el-Hai, the enemy would be obliged to fight front to flank, that is. with his battle line and his communications parallel, a position which in the event of defeat would render retreat difficult, and in any event disorderly. Thirdly, the enemy could not turn the British left, so that, secure also on that flank, the British might strike at the Turkish communications

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from across the Tigris as far west as was practicable. In short, the key to Kut and its defences was not Sanna-i-yat, but the bridgehead. That taken, it would be feasible to open an attack upon the Shumran position, and that also taken Kut was won.

The main Turkish forces had, in view of the British concentration at Sheik Saad, been withdrawn to the Kut side of the river, the anticipation evidently being that Sanna-i-yat would again be the terrain of the chief attempt. The real point of the British commander's strategy indeed at first escaped the enemy's attention altogether. Nor was the real point one which would in any event have been easy to divine, for its very boldness was its best disguise. And its boldness lay in the reliance, entirely justified, upon the security of both flanks of the British line against counter-attack. That security made it possible with little risk to stretch out the line along the right bank of the river in feelers for the weak spot of the defence and the most effective point for crossing. Obligated to hold on at Sanna-i-yat, the Turkish forces would be stretched out at the same time, so that either the position at Sanna-i-yat would have to be evacuated, or the peril faced of the British striking across the Tigris westward and cutting communications. In short, the design was to impede the Turkish commander on the horns of a dilemma, and this design was the less apparent because seemingly the British operations did open with an assault upon the Sanna-i-yat defences. Nor was it until the enemy's strength had been massed in that quarter that the weight of the offensive was seen to be swung against the defences covering the Shatt-el-Hai.

For the purpose of the British operations Maude formed his troops into two columns. That under Lieut.-General Sir A. S. Cobbe, V.C., was to attack at Sanna-i-yat; that under Lieut.-General Sir W. R. Marshall to move against the Hai defences by a surprise march.

This march, the column having been concentrated before Es Sinn, took place on the night of December 13. At six the following morning the Hai was crossed at

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two points—Basrugiyeh and Atah. Pivoting on its right, the column then moved north, the infantry on the east side of the Hai, the cavalry on the west side. Enemy advanced posts were thus driven in. The move had proved a surprise because on the preceding day (December 13) General Cobbe had opened a bombardment of the Sanna-i-yat defences.

Having launched his stroke, General Maude acted swiftly. pontoons and other materials being already pushed across the country in the rear of Marshall's column, the Hai was on December 14 bridged at Atah. But the enemy had been quick to appreciate the threat these operations implied, for his first proceeding was the removal of his own pontoon bridge east of Shumran to a point higher up stream, though that work on the night of December 14 was seriously interfered with by British airmen, who, flying by moonlight, bombed the pontoons, causing some of them to break adrift. The enemy bridge over the Tigris near the mouth of the Hai was broken up by gunfire, and pontoon rafts, used as ferries, sunk. This done, General Marshall extended his grip upon the Turkish defences, and by December 18 had succeeded in cutting in opposite Kut between the outer Turkish defences east of the Hai and those west of it. The position at its apex was at once most difficult to defend, and most exposed to cross fire.

This beginning had been good, and despite the heavy rains which fell in the latter part of December, 1916, and the first week of January, 1917, converting large tracts of the country into swamps, and causing a rapid rise of the Tigris, activities were not suspended. The light railway was pushed forward as far as the Shatt-el-Hai; additional bridges were thrown over that waterway, and new roads made. Raids carried out against the Turkish communications resulted in captures of stock and grain. But although the bombardment of the Sanna-i-yat defences by Cobbe's force continued, the enemy had now become well awake to the threat against his right rear. He had accordingly rebuilt his pontoon bridge to the west of the Shumran bend.

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On December 20, under cover of a bombardment both at Sanna and from that position along the Tigris as far as Kut, an attempt had been made by a British column to bridge the river four miles above Shumran. The attempt did not succeed. The bank on the farther (left) side was found to be strongly entrenched. Though gallantly essayed, the launching of the pontoons had to be given up owing to the severity of the hostile fire.

Notwithstanding that their lateral communications on the Woolpress village side of the river had been severed, the Turks, clinging to their footholds both east and west of and astride the Shatt-el-Hai, kept open the communications between these positions and Kut by means of ferries, and appeared determined to hold them at all costs. It became necessary therefore to clear them out. The position east of the Hai was first dealt with. Time was not to be lost, for among other things the enemy had control of the river bunds, and in the high flood season, now approaching, might, by cutting these embankments, swamp the British lines. Some 2,600 yards in length, the Turkish inner line east of the Hai extended from the Tigris above the Megasis Fort to near the mouth of the Shatt-el-Hai, thus enclosing a roughly quadrangular tract, bounded on three sides by the river. A double row of sandhills 200 yards from the outfall of the Shatt-el-Hai had been utilised for covered-in machine-gun emplacements, and formed a formidable point of support. Behind this first line was a second, the intervening ground, 500 to 1,000 yards in width, also entrenched. Finally, linked up with the right of the second line and immediately adjacent to the Tigris was another group of sandhills, which sheltered the ferries from direct fire. The sandhills formed a last position.

The defences commanded a field of fire across an expanse both flat and, save for a fringe of brushwood along the river bank, bare. The fortified line had consequently to be approached by sapping. Amid almost unceasing rain, and exposed to persistent fire both from the hostile defences in front and from enemy batteries

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on the farther side of the river, the troops of General Cobbe's column, who had been told off for the work, dug, between January 5 and January 7, some 25,000 yards of saps and trenches, and advanced to within 200 yards.

Opened on January 7, the bombardment was continued throughout January 8. On January 9 the first assault was launched. The point selected was the section of the defences, 600 yards long, nearest the Shatt-el-Hai. It happened, unfortunately, that the morning was marked by a thick mist. This helped the attacking troops in the first rush, but hampered the artillery support, and it enabled the enemy to prepare and launch a counter-attack. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting ensued. On the left of the British attack were the Gurkhas and Mahrattas. Receiving and throwing back the weight of the hostile onset, and pressing on, they reached the Tigris. The enemy now found his own right exposed, and his next move was to throw his weight against the British right and try to press them back against the Shatt-el-Hai. The British right, formed of the Manchesters and an Indian brigade, could not, however, be dislodged from the footing they had gained. The ground won was consolidated.

Next day the British attack was renewed. Foot by foot the Turks resisted, but they were cleared out of one trench after another, and at nightfall held only the last position among the second group of sandhills.

The third day opened with an assault on this foothold. The thrust got home, but had to give way before a counter-attack. Encouraged by his success, the enemy, unfortunately for himself, tried to push farther forward. His movement resulted in a heavy reverse. The Sikhs here fought magnificently. In view of the cost of attempting openly to rush the enemy's final position, it was deemed advisable to complete trenches enabling the assaulting troops to assemble under cover. This labour occupied five days. On its completion a Turkish redoubt so constructed as to enfilade the British assault—this work had already given trouble—was stormed in a

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night operation. The British who had taken it were driven out. They took it again, and were again ejected. Next morning they seized the work a third—and last—time. The general attack had been fixed for January 19. During part of the night of the 18th the Turks kept up a very active rifle and machine-gun fire. When day broke it was found that their whole position on the sandhills had been evacuated.

The fighting since January 7 had been severe, and for the most part hand to hand. Events proved, however, that it had already vitally damaged the defence. There was heavy fighting still ahead, but from this time the issue was no longer in any doubt.

The next step was the capture of the defences astride the mouth of the Hai—the connecting link between those in the Khadairi bend and those in the Dahra bend. Ingeniously designed as they had been, the enemy thought Kut could not be successfully assaulted from this south side. Since, too, there were on the north side of the river the Sanna-i-yat maze below and the strongly fortified Shumran bend above Kut, it will be seen that, so far as field works and engineering skill could do it, the place had been converted into a fortress of the first class, and was intended to remain on that footing.

The central hostile position astride the Hai presented altogether an outer face, 3,800 yards in length, and formed one maze of works and diggings, and maze is in this instance literally the exact term to employ. Further, though the artillery support on the British side was not inadequate—General Maude had seen to that—nevertheless the problem of transport, improved as the river service had been, did not admit of the phenomenal gunfire witnessed in operations in Europe. The task of capture really hung upon the valour and skill of the infantry. It happened, however, that the Commander-in-Chief of the Expedition had chosen his lieutenants with his usual good judgment. General Marshall, while inclined to bold methods, qualified that trait with habitual coolness. He was decisive, quick to seize the spirit and substance of an order, never lost time, and

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was legitimately confident, because clear-minded. General Cobbe, with a far from common knowledge of the co-operation of infantry, artillery and horse, and of what they could and what they could not do, was always to be depended upon to employ his force with the maximum of effect. Such practical qualities were invaluable. There were no risks of hitches and break-downs; no essentials overlooked. Admirable troops, so led, might confidently be asked to undertake difficult tasks.

The assault on the central position, opened on January 25 by General Marshall's column, carried the whole of the first line. While making good, the British were repeatedly counter-attacked. These efforts were marked by desperation. More than once it came to bayonet fighting. But in that the Turks lost heavily. On the western side of the Hai more particularly there were during the 25th four of these enemy onsets. The first failed completely; the second, pressed with determination as far as the captured line, was finally beaten by a charge of the Warwicks, who with admirable gallantry advanced across the open to where the *mêlée* was fiercest, and turned the scale. The third reaction was smashed by the British batteries. The enemy, nevertheless, made yet another effort, prefaced by a concentration of his guns and trench mortars. Under cover of that fire he on this western sector won his defences back.

It was a Pyrrhic triumph all the same, and temporary at that, for not only had the cost been excessive, but when two Punjabi battalions were sent forward to renew the assault on the morning of the 26th they cleared the battered trenches with a rush and put on this part of the business what proved the finishing touch.

From January 26 until February 1 there were repeated assaults and bombing attacks on both faces of the salient. But on the latter date the hostile third line east of the Hai was carried by the Cheshires, who bombed along its entire length. On the west side the struggle went on until February 3. By that time nothing was left of the salient it had taken the enemy months to fortify, save

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the Liquorice Factory at its north-west corner, adjoining the line covering the Dahra bend. The fighting had been severe. Trenches were found crowded with Turkish dead, for the British gunners had excelled themselves both in energy and in the boldness with which their batteries had been pushed forward. To quote also the words of General Maude on the qualities of the infantry shown during the operations in the Khadairi bend, and not less applicable here, "the enemy, in spite of his tenacity, had more than met his match in the dash and resolution of our troops, and had learned a lesson which was to become more deeply engrained."

Alike by the now yawning breach in his works, and by the casualties inflicted on his force, the enemy must by this have realised that he was waging a losing battle. But apart from the belief in the impregnability of Kut, there is no doubt that the orders were to hold out to the last at all costs. In the defence of fortified positions the Turk is at his best, and the resistance had been desperate because there was nothing immediately at the back of it. Thrown on the one hand into Persia, or on the other ear-marked for the project against Egypt, the Turkish forces had been scattered in the confidence that in any event Kut would prove an absolute bar to a British advance. Every day the political as well as the military wisdom of General Maude's decision to attack became more evident. No enemy troops advanced to the relief of the hard-pressed garrison. None were available.

The third phase of the attack on the right bank—that upon the defences in the Dahra bend—opened on February 6 with a bombardment continued by bursts of fire at irregular intervals during the two following days, and accompanied by enterprises against advance posts. One by one these were cleared off the ground, and the hostile front exposed. The Dahra bend is rather broad than narrow, in shape almost an equilateral triangle. It was determined in the first instance to assault the Turkish line in the centre and on its extreme right. In the centre the King's Own broke in ;

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on the right the Worcesters. Working towards Yssu-fiyah, the Worcesters reached the Tigris opposite the southern end of the Shumran peninsula and entrenched.

Then on February 10 a grip was taken on the enemy's left, adjacent to the Liquorice Factory. Steps were now set afoot to connect up the breaches there and in the centre. Though enfiladed by fire from across the river at Kut, replied to on the British side with a sustained bombardment, the Buffs and Gurkhas cleared the intermediate section of the defences, joined up with the King's Own, and in company with them pushed forward. There had thus been torn in the position a gap 2,000 yards wide and 300 yards deep. The Liquorice Factory, no longer defensible, was abandoned. By February 13 the Turkish defences in the bend had been isolated. Communications across the Tigris were kept under continuous bombardment.

A final assault delivered on February 15 against the extreme left of the hostile position as it now existed—the front as driven in ran diagonally across the Dahra bend from south-west to north-east—by unmasking the enemy's batteries, revealed his expectation that the weight of the renewed British attack would fall on his left. As a fact, the sector picked out for the real assault was the right centre. In view, however, alike of his own expectations and of the feint the enemy had massed his main force on his left, and a British barrage was put down to keep it there. At the same time, the Welsh Fusiliers and the South Wales Borderers, launched against the sector marked out, went forward with irresistible dash, broke through on a front of 700 yards, bombed along the defences over another 1,000 yards, and pushed the Turks back nearly a third of a mile. Counter-attacks, when they developed, had none of the *elan* of those in the fighting for the central position astride the Hai. Immediately after the Welshmen, and on their right, the Buffs and Dogras went in, and wheeling to north cut off the enemy's left. Pushed back to the banks of the Tigris, his surviving troops there laid down their arms. They numbered about 1,000. All

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that now remained of the Dahra bend position was a section of rear trenches on the Turkish right, contiguous to the river and about a mile in extent, and it had been intended to attack these on the morning of the 16th, but two companies of a Gurkha battalion in the line opposite this point, disappointed at not having been more actively employed, essayed a night raid on their own initiative; crept over in the darkness; broke into the position, and before daylight had seized it from end to end, adding 264 to the total of 2,005 prisoners.

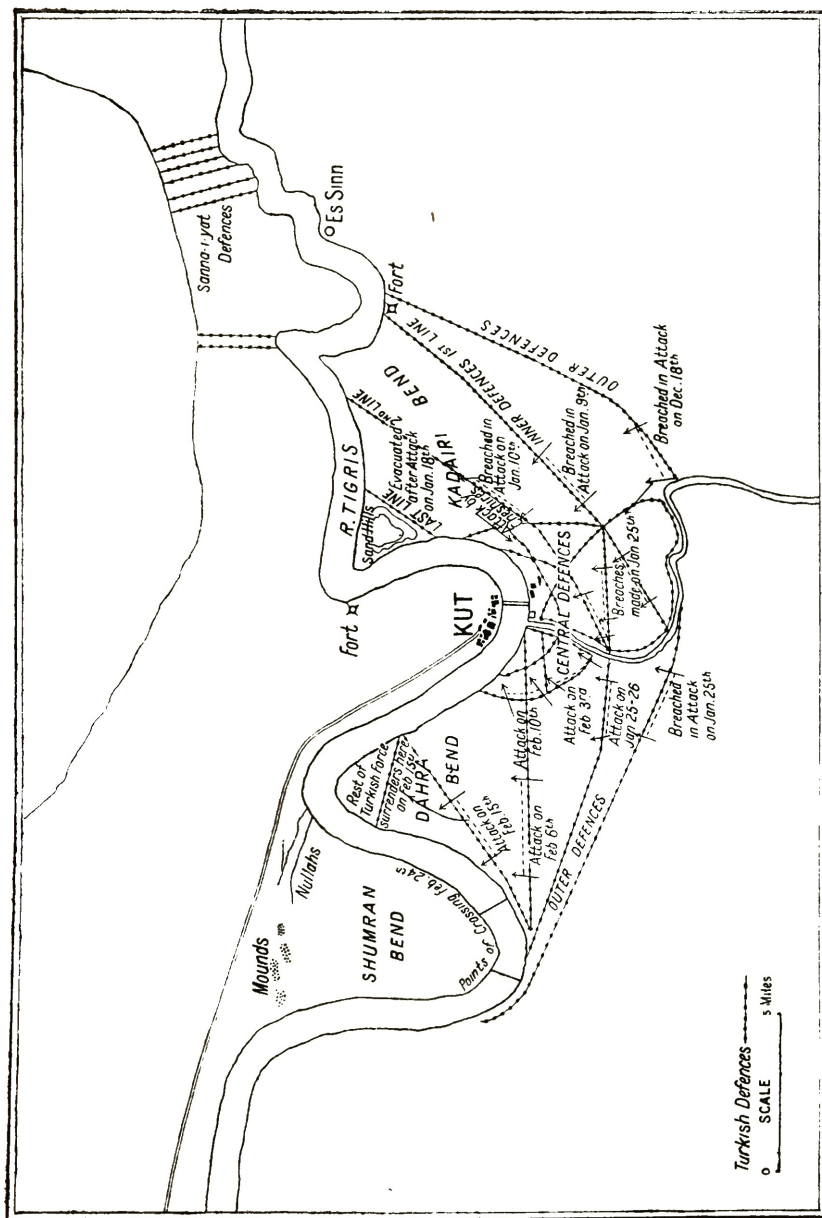
Now began another phase of the operations. The position in the Shumran bend had been uncovered, and as the key of Kut, it was the point of the main impending operations. But it remained advisable to disguise that intention as far as possible. On the day therefore after the capture of the Dahra bend defences (February 16), Cobbe opened his assault at Sanna-i-yat. Delivered when the ground, owing to a day and a night of soaking rain, seemed impracticable, the opening movement took the Turks by surprise. The first and second lines of Turkish trenches were taken with little loss. But once recovered from his astonishment the enemy gathered his strength for a counterblow, backed by the full weight of his guns and trench mortars, and though the Turkish counter-attacks were costly the British failed to hold. It looked, indeed, as if the experiences of April were to be repeated. Of course that was the impression that the enemy had been intending to form. For three days Cobbe's force was seemingly inactive. Then the assault was repeated, and at the same point of the line. Again the enemy was surprised, not looking for a blow in the same place, and for the second time, once more too with but slight British losses, the Turkish first and second lines were broken through. Six enemy counter-attacks resulted. On this occasion they failed. The British were not to be dislodged. Rarely in any battle had tenacity been either more sharply tried or more brilliantly displayed. Where the line swayed it had at once been restored. On the right, held by the

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Seaforths, it had refused even to sway. The Highlanders stood like the granite of their native mountains.

Nor was this stratagem the only resource. A bombardment of Kut had been opened from across the river, and preparations made for throwing a bridge over from the Liquorice Factory. While pains were apparently taken to conceal them, the preparations were pushed on during daylight, as if time were precious. The device had the effect intended. Occupied with the defence of Sanna, and watching his position at Shumran, the Turkish commander now became concerned for his centre. It was weak. To stiffen it he moved more of his force from Shumran into the Kut peninsula. To move them back to Shumran meant a *détour* of ten miles, nearly a day's march. Lest, however, there should be any mistake a detachment of Punjabis, accompanied by Sappers and Miners and Sikh Pioneers, carried out a raid across the river from the Megasis Fort.

This change in the enemy dispositions accomplished, the point picked out for crossing was the south end of the Shumran bend. The covering troops, the Norfolks and two battalions of Gurkhas, were silently ferried over before daybreak (February 23). The Norfolks caught the Turks literally napping, rounded up 200 prisoners, and took five machine-guns. But the Gurkhas, lower downstream, were less fortunate. While still afloat, their pontoon rafts were swept by a machine-gun fusillade. It would have been legitimate in the circumstances to give up the attempt. Notwithstanding their serious losses, however, the Gurkhas declined to go back, landed, and joined up on the right of the Norfolks. Supported by a fourth battalion ferried over where the Norfolks had landed, the covering troops then advanced on a west and east line, and by the afternoon had cleared the southern end of the peninsula to the depth of a mile. Meanwhile, the rest of the bend had been laid under a British cross fire over the river from the West, and meanwhile too the bridging had gone on. By half-past four in the afternoon the bridge was ready for traffic, and by



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nightfall the infantry of one division had passed over. Already the covering troops, defeating enemy counter-attacks, had taken 700 prisoners. It may be added that on this day (February 23) General Cobbe had eaten further into the Sanna position by seizing the third and fourth lines. The defence of Kut was breaking up.

By dawn on the 24th the whole of Marshall's column were on the north side of the river, and the Shumran bend in their possession. The stiff fighting was at its outlet. Here the chief Turkish defences lay. To the north-east various nullahs, traces of ancient ditches or lines of wall covered with earth had been taken advantage of; to the north-west an expanse of mounds and ruins. The enemy fought stubbornly, but aeroplane reconnaissances while the battle was in progress showed that his main columns were already in retreat and that the opposing force was a rearguard. The latter were driven back with heavy casualties and a further loss of 1,650 prisoners, besides four guns, some thousands of rifles, and a great quantity of ammunition, equipment and stores. Coincidentally, Cobbe (February 24) broke through the sixth and last trench lines at Sanna, and the British gunboats, ordered upstream from Falahiyeh, had reached Kut.

During the night of February 24 the enemy's rearguard at Shumran decamped. Early on the morning of the 25th, therefore, the pursuit began, the cavalry to the north on the enemy's right rear, the gunboats following him upstream on his left.

To check this movement the hostile rearguard had taken up an entrenched position two miles to the west of the Shumran bend, and again, though shelled from the river, held out during the day. The British infantry attack, pressed home into the Turkish trenches, took another 400 prisoners. Well supported by artillery sunk in gunpits, the resistance had been brave, but the rearguard had been sacrificed to save the main force.

Nothing now remained for the retiring army save alacrity. With the object of intercepting them, a column

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of the British troops made a forced march of eighteen miles across the desert plain. On the other hand, to quicken their own movement the Turks cast aside guns, rifles, equipment, munitions, vehicles and stores of all kinds, and these strewn their track for mile after mile. Despite such abandonments the gunboat flotilla on the one side and the British cavalry on the other gradually caught up. The flotilla had to fight a duel with the enemy's artillery covering his rear and, overtaking the hostile steamers, an action in which four of the Turkish vessels, *Sumana*, *Basra*, *Firefly* and *Pioneer*, were taken. The loss of these steamers, crippling their river communications, was for the Turks a heavy blow. *Basra* was crowded with men who had fallen out on the march or had been wounded.

So rapid had been the enemy's flight that on the evening of February 27 his troops reached Aziziya, 50 miles from Kut. They had covered that distance in two days. Nevertheless, all through the 27th the British gunboats had hung on to and shelled them from the river, while the British cavalry harried their outer flank, and when the retreating army reached Aziziya and streamed through that place it was as a broken, demoralised and, in part, unarmed mob.

At Aziziya the pursuit paused. Before a further advance could be made from that point, midway between Kut and Bagdad, the line of communication, thus lengthened, had to be reorganised. To have gone at once would have been the haste which in the end loses time. In no small measure it had been the improvement in communications which in the attack upon Kut had rendered General Maude's penetrating and skilful strategy at once practicable and telling. But while Aziziya had to be converted into a suitable jumping off place, it was equally urgent that time should not be wasted. How efficient by comparison transport had become was proved by the transfer of the necessary munitions and stores from below Kut in less than seven days. Six months before it could hardly have been done in as many weeks. In the operations now

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immediately to follow, this acceleration made the difference between assured success and almost equally certain failure.

During the same interval General Cobbe's column had closed to the front, clearing up on the way the line of the Turkish retreat.

Communications readjusted, Marshall's column on March 5 moved forward 18 miles to Zeur. It was a long march, but the troops were again fit. They were screened by the cavalry, which pushing on a further seven miles to Laj, there came upon an enemy rearguard holding the nullahs, which here intersect the country like a network. It happened that the British horse reached Laj in the midst of an intense dust storm. Denuded, where arid, of vegetation, the surface of the vast level plain, when swept by dry winds, becomes obscured as by an impenetrable dust cloud driven before the blast like a monstrous rolling bank of smoke. This impeded the cavalry, but on the other hand it equally mystified the enemy both as to the strength of the force and its movements. A regiment of hussars, charging forward, actually found themselves in the Turkish position. Feeling themselves in the circumstances insecure, the rearguard, as soon as darkness fell, withdrew, guiding themselves by following the river.

On the succeeding day (March 6) the dust storm was still blowing, but once more taking the river as a guide, the British cavalry again pushed on. They rode as far as Ctesiphon, and found there an entrenched position on both sides of the river elaborately prepared, but deserted. Not a Turk was anywhere met with. Evidently the apparition of the pursuing cavalry at Laj had decided the Turkish commander that to stand at Ctesiphon involved under the conditions too great a risk. After all the dust storm, though an ill-wind, had cleared the most serious military obstacle between Kut and the Diala. Besides, the rapidity of the British movements had afforded the enemy neither time to refit nor to receive reinforcements. This state of affairs was ascertained from Turkish prisoners picked up in a dashing

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reconnaissance extended nine miles beyond Ctesiphon, and to within three of the Diala position.

Behind the cavalry Marshall's column had on this day (March 6) marched seventeen miles to Bustan, and Cobbe's column had moved up from Aziziya to Zeur.

In movement early on the 7th, the British advance guard in the afternoon reached the Diala, eight miles from Bagdad. In its lower course the Diala flows into the Tigris across a perfectly flat expanse. On the farther, or Bagdad, side were gardens, groves, and cultivated country; on the nearer side, the bare and open plain. Having, while his own batteries were concealed, this advantageous field of fire, the enemy, it was evident, meant seriously to dispute the crossing. To attempt that operation in daylight was in fact impracticable. All that could be done, therefore, was to wait for darkness, and in the interval to search the hostile gun positions both from in front and with the armament of the flotilla on the Tigris.

Along the farther bank of the Diala, hidden among the bushes and groves, the enemy had posted machine-guns. The night of March 7, it chanced, was one of bright moonlight, the weather having now again become settled. Accordingly, when the pontoons were moved up they came under a withering rifle and machine-gun fusillade. The first that got into the water was forthwith riddled with shot. Five others were floated. None, however, could be ferried over. All the men on them were either killed or disabled. Out of control, they drifted with the current, were carried down to the Tigris, and there recovered with the surviving wounded.

For the time being the attempt had to be given up. So far, however, from being embarrassed by these difficulties, General Maude had determined upon a diversion which, as it proved, succeeded completely. Kut had been taken by an attack from the south, and it was now evident that the enemy feared a repetition of that manœuvre, for aeroplane reconnaissance dis-

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closed that he had thrown up defences round the suburb of Bagdad on the opposite bank of the Tigris, and taken measures to guard himself against being turned from the south-west. With the ready resource of a masterly hand General Maude resolved to play up to these apprehensions. The terminus of the Bagdad railway was in this suburb on the farther side of the river, and the line was carried up to Samarra on that bank. Further a little to the north-west of the suburb was a shallow lake of considerable area, the Akarkuf, connected both with the Tigris and with the Euphrates by a cross waterway similar to the Shatt-el-Hai. Some undulations besides here broke the dead level of the country. Altogether the position on that bank offered obvious possibilities for defence. On that account Maude had decided to launch his main assault across the Diala, but if there was an important diversion on the farther bank it could hardly fail, skilfully managed, to promote the chief design.

To begin with, therefore, a small column, detached from Marshall's force, was ferried over the Tigris in order to open from the other side of the main stream an enfilade fire upon the enemy's posts and batteries along the Diala; and half a mile below Bawi, that is, out of the range of the Turkish guns, the engineers, veiled by the first manoeuvre, began (March 8) on the Tigris to throw a bridge across. The bridge was completed during the day, and the cavalry passed over followed by part of Cobbe's column. As at Ctesiphon, the country here also is cut up by nullahs and ancient ditches, some deep enough to be impassable until vamped by gangways of earth. Such work impeded progress, but the troops by nightfall had established contact with the enemy's outposts.

Coincidentally the efforts to cross the Diala were resumed. It was necessary to keep the Turks' attention divided between the two points. All day on March 8 the positions on the farther side of the tributary had been hammered by the British artillery. Then in the night troops tried to cross at four points. At three these

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attempts were defeated, but at the fourth, that farthest upstream and most distant from Bagdad, the ferry was worked for an hour before the enemy mustered in strength enough to stop it. By that time, however, a party of the Loyal North Lancashires had gained a footing in a bend of the bund on the farther bank, and though heavily counter-attacked, isolated for the time being, and sniped perpetually from adjacent gardens and buildings, held on during the next twenty-two hours.

The operations now proceeded simultaneously on both sides of the Tigris, and to follow their effect it is advisable to relate them as far as possible in the order of time.

On March 9 the cavalry with part of Cobbe's force drove the Turks out of the village of Shawa Khan and advanced to and attacked an entrenched position covering Bagdad from the south. The position, some six miles from the city, was strongly held and stubbornly defended. Under cover of darkness, however, the enemy retired from it to another entrenched line three miles to the rear. But on this day again a stiff wind arose, accompanied by a dust storm of unusual density. It tried the endurance of the British troops severely, but it appears to have tried the enemy to an equal degree, for learning that the British cavalry had worked round on his right flank, and had reached a point two miles west of Bagdad railway station, his troops again withdrew. This time they retreated north, not to Bagdad but beyond it. While the British cavalry went in pursuit, following the Turks four miles beyond Bagdad upstream, the infantry, having struck the single track railway from Bagdad to Feludja on the Euphrates, followed it until they reached the Bagdad terminus, and occupied the suburb on that bank.

This was just after daybreak on the morning of March 10. About an hour previously the crossing of the Diala had begun. To begin with, a stiff opposition appeared probable. Evidently, however, the news of the breakdown of the defence on the other side of the Tigris had filtered out and shook the resistance. By seven in

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the morning the East Lancashires and Wiltshires had been ferried across, and enlarging the bridgehead held by the North Lancashires, enabled the work of bridging to be entered upon. By midday the bridge had been completed.

The hostile points of support on the farther side of the Diala were the villages of Saidah, Dibaiyi and Qaruarah, the last half-way between the Diala and Bagdad. Driven out of all three with heavy losses, the Turks lost, besides 300 prisoners, a large quantity of arms, munitions and equipment.

There now remained between the British force and Bagdad only the ridge of Tel-el-Mohammad. It was still held, and the intention was to assault it at dawn. But at half-past one in the morning patrols reported the enemy to be in retreat. A movement forward towards the ridge was accordingly at once made. The position was occupied with but slight resistance. The dust storm which covered the country on this side as well as on the other favoured the enemy's withdrawal.

Advancing nevertheless as rapidly as possible, General Marshall and his troops entered Bagdad early on March 11. The inhabitants welcomed them with every sign of satisfaction. For two hundred years the ancient capital of the Arabian Caliphs had been in the hands of the Turks. While its prestige remained as one of the Holy Places of the Moslem faith, and it was still of importance as an *entrepôt* on the overland trade route between India and the Levant by way of Persia, it had languished. Nor had the as yet incompletd railway materially aided the city's prosperity, for the line, as already noted, was a military rather than a commercial project. How, besides, was any solid prosperity to be built up on such a foundation as the Turkish system of government?

For the moment, however, the manifest pleasure of the population at the sight of the British was stimulated by the anarchy that prevailed, but now certain at once to be suppressed. During the preceding fortnight, beginning indeed forthwith on intelligence of the fall of

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Kut, the enemy had begun in Bagdad to remove his stores. The city formed his main advanced base, and the mass of material, having regard to the length and character of the Turkish communications, was too great to allow of transport, crippled besides now by the loss of his steamer flotilla. As much of it as could be was destroyed. But the process had been interrupted, with the result that much machinery, the plant of the railway workshops, materials for railway construction and repairs, rolling stock, cranes and winches, signal and telegraphic equipment, pipes and pumps, ice-making plant, soda water plant and hospital outfit had had, though in part damaged, to be left behind. Besides this were arms and munitions. Among the guns in the arsenal, in addition to cannon old and modern, were found those taken by the enemy at the surrender of Kut nearly a year before. These guns General Townshend had rendered useless. The reserve of small arms seized was very large. It was not merely the mass of the booty which signified, but the loss it represented to the enemy—a loss he could ill afford, and one that must in any event take no little time to repair. The blow had indeed been fatal to any successful prosecution of his campaign.

Clearly this destruction, entered upon when it was seen that owing to the rapidity of the British movements further removals had become impracticable, had incited the appetite for plunder among the irregulars who formed the camp following of the Turkish troops. No sooner therefore had the latter departed, if not before, than the hangers-on turned to sack habitations, despoil the residents, and loot the shops in the bazaars. At various points already they had started fires. With the arrival of the British troops they were caught red-handed. Guards had been formed to put down disorder and looting, and these sweeping through the several quarters of the city speedily rounded up the miscreants. Swift and summary, though even-handed, justice soon made every part of Bagdad at once tranquil and safe, and its normal life was resumed under a novel sense of

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security—that security of the British raj which is still the standing wonder of the East.

The British flag was hoisted over the Serail, the buildings of the Turkish provincial administration; the gunboat flotilla, steaming up line ahead, anchored off the British Residency. Well planned, ably executed, the offensive had proved a brilliant success.

## CHAPTER XV

### MESOPOTAMIA CAMPAIGN AFTER THE CAPTURE OF BAGDAD

Effects of the Turkish reverses—Arab rising in the Yemen—General Maude's energetic measures—Advance up the Tigris—Cobbe's victory at Mushadiya—Advance along the Diala—Bakuba occupied—Marshall's operations on the Euphrates and capture of Feludja—Action on the Jebel Hamrin ridge—Turkish reaction—Combined movement against Deltawa—Maude's successful stratagem—Turks defeated—British victory at Istabulat—Capture of Samarra—The health and efficiency of the army—First operations against Ramadie—Why indecisive—Second Expedition—Battle of Ramadie—Capture of the Turkish force—Cavalry dash to Mendali—Results of British administration in Mesopotamia—Maude's death at Bagdad.

WITH the capture of Bagdad the aspect of affairs in Mesopotamia entirely changed, and the change, as it proved, was enduring. Not alone had Turkish prestige received a severe blow. The extent to which the resources of the Turks had been damaged became more apparent as time went on. When, threats apart, it was seen that the power effectually to react against the British did not in fact exist, opposition to German-Turkish schemes in Persia on the one side and among the Arabs of the Hedjaz on the other hardened. The Russian activities in Persia, resistant of the German-Turkish invasion, reached their high-water mark in the early part of 1917. But though from that time, owing to political troubles at home, they declined, and continued to decline, nevertheless, the earlier Turkish foothold in Persia, lost through the combined Russian and British pressure, could not be regained, and notwithstanding the completion of the strategical railway

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from Damascus to Mecca, the Turkish hold upon the Yemin was jeopardised. The Sheerif of Mecca proclaimed his independence.

While, however, there could hardly be a stronger contrast between the rational boldness of Maude's Expedition and the hesitation, alternating with haste, which had led to preceding failures, it had still to be presumed that the enemy remained capable of reacting. Steps had therefore to be taken, and without delay, to render the British hold upon Bagdad secure.

The three measures immediately and coincidentally necessary were first to make safe the British right upon the Diala, secondly to obtain control of the Tigris for a sufficient distance to the north, and thirdly to secure the British left by a move towards the Euphrates. Of these measures the second was perhaps the most urgent. The season marked by the annual melting of the snows in the Caucasian and Persian highlands, was close at hand. Both the great rivers of Mesopotamia then reach their highest level. In this annual rise and fall they resemble the Nile, and like the Nile used in ancient times to spread their waters far over the plain. The secret of the wonderful ancient fertility of Mesopotamia, these floods had been brought under control by the most extensive system of irrigation that has ever existed at any period or in any part of the world. All that remains of it are the traces which not even a thousand years of desolation and neglect have been able to efface. Most important among them are the bunds along the river banks. Since, however, the bunds have been worn down in places, the flood waters pour over, so that contiguous to these half-ruined bunds there are vast marshes, where the waters stagnate, while the rest of the country, subject to periodical and prolonged drought, is a desert. Since also of the two great rivers the Tigris, owing to its shorter course, is the more subject in the flood season to violent spates, often rising many feet in level in the course of a night, it was open to the enemy, having control of the bunds, to cut them. That, while immobi-

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lising the British force, to say nothing of the incidental consequences upon the health of the troops, would more than any other proceeding have assisted a hostile reaction.

On that account General Maude decided to act at once. Accordingly, having occupied Yahudie, 20 miles above Bagdad on the same bank, he pushed an advance guard of adequate strength as far as Kasirin, eight miles farther on. The Turks were given no time to rally, for the British appeared at Kasirin on April 14, three days after the entry into Bagdad. It was on the opposite side of the river, on the railway line to Samarra, that the enemy had taken up a position. Some five miles south of Mushadiya the railway ceases to follow the river, and for some 30 miles or more cuts across country, avoiding an extensive bend. This was the point where the Turks had elected to entrench. With the object primarily of protecting the bunds, General Cobbe was assigned the task of dislodging them. The manœuvre chosen was a night march, and it was coincident with the British advance on the Bagdad side, an advance with which it was reasonable to conclude the enemy's attention would be occupied.

Cobbe's march proved to be unopposed, and at day-break on April 14 his column came within sight of the Turkish entrenchments. The position had been selected by the enemy with skill. Just here the otherwise dead level of the country is broken by a range of sandhills. The highest are near the river, and the space between them and the great waterway cut up by canals and ditches. Entrenchment had added to the difficulty of those obstacles. The railway cuts through the sandhills, which farthest from the Tigris form a succession of undulations, one ridge behind another. The entire front of the Turkish position was seven miles in extent. Not least among the features which gave it military value was the field of fire it commanded. Before it lay nothing save the bare plain.

Cobbe undoubtedly had before him a ticklish proposition. As usual, however, he made the best use of his

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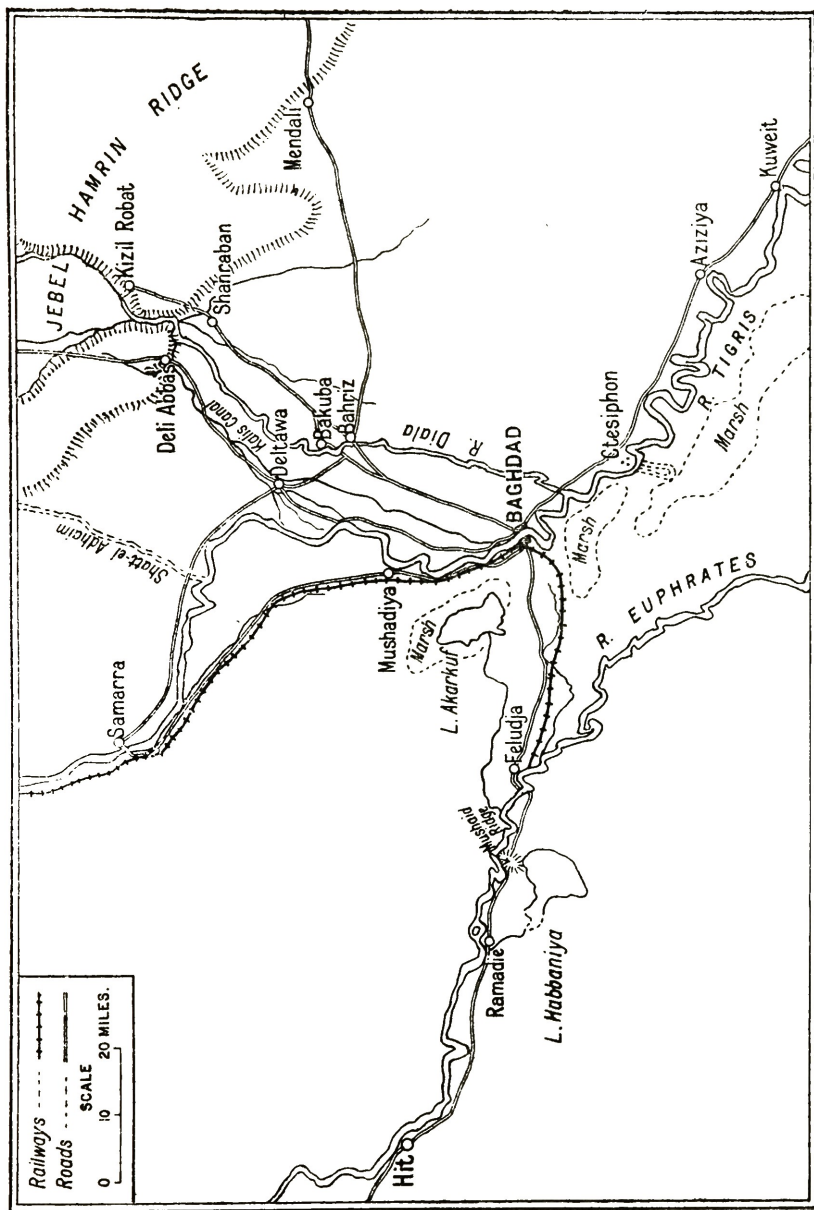
resources. His decision was to throw the whole column against that part of the hostile line farthest from the river. Operating on the British left the cavalry were to work round upon the Turkish rear. The risk of these dispositions was that the enemy might counter-attack on the opposite wing, but Cobbe very properly judged that, owing to the coincident British advance on the Bagdad side of the Tigris, the risk in the circumstances was slight. On the other hand, his own movement threatened to push the Turkish right in the first instance parallel with the railway, and next off it, so that if successful the manœuvre would shepherd the hostile force into the bend and cut off their retreat.

Well supported by machine-gun fire, the cavalry movement was completely successful. The force worked round upon the enemy's rear as designed, and the effect was added to in no small measure by an enfilade bombardment of the Turkish defences by the river gunboats. At the same time a stiff artillery barrage was put down on the Turkish trenches on both sides of the railway. Notwithstanding this, the enemy kept up a brisk reply, fluctuating, but at times intense. Despite the tenacity of the resistance, however, Cobbe's infantry carried one ridge after another. Finally, in the afternoon all the defences had been won on the enemy's right, and there remained only his main position. The Black Watch and the Gurkhas, working in combination, were launched against it. The charge was brilliant. As the enemy stood to it and put up a fight at close quarters there was a grapple with bayonet and kukri. The struggle, though fierce, was brief. The Turkish casualties were heavy, and the position won by a clean cut. Fighting almost yard by yard, the remnant of the defending force fell back along the railway towards Mushadiya station. There, though darkness had meanwhile fallen, they rallied, and in the fitful light of a moon veiled every now and then by ragged clouds the battle went on. The British batteries, whipped up in all haste, had galloped forward over the sandhills ; here and there some enemy guns still boomed

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in reply. The station buildings, loopholed for defence, formed a strong point of support. But the main body of the Black Watch and Gurkhas having come up and recovered their second wind, at midnight closed in. The station was rushed. This time the Turkish retirement was a flight. The chase was kept up for half a mile north of the station, and then called off, but the hostile force had been so completely broken that next day nothing was seen of them. They were re-discovered by the airmen the day after that (April 16) retreating north in a straggling rout spread from front to rear over twenty miles of country. Even the rear-most stragglers were 25 miles north of Mushadiya. The van was nearly 45 miles away, and more than 50 from the site of the main battle. General Maude records that in these operations his troops displayed fine endurance and determination, and the praise, which from such a commander was praise indeed, was well deserved. They had marched and fought up to midnight on April 14 for thirty-six hours without a break, in that climate a rare feat of endurance. Nothing could better attest their magnificent *moral*.

The Tigris for a sufficient distance above Bagdad having been secured, it became easier to solidify the position on the Diala. Here the enemy still held Bakuba, 30 miles north-east of Bagdad and the centre of a cultivated area. The town, too, marked the junction of the roads from Samarra and Bagdad, with the route running north to Khanikin, and to seize the place meant severing the enemy's chief communications with Persia. Bakuba lies on the eastern bank of the Diala. A British post was established opposite the town on the western bank. While the garrison of Bakuba, not a large force, were thus expecting a direct attack, a British column, crossing the Diala five miles downstream at Bahriz, took Bakuba from the reverse direction, and no other way being open the Turks retreated north towards Khanikin. At this date the Russians under the command of General Baratoff, who had defeated the Turkish 13th



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Army Corps, were pushing on towards Kasr-i-Shirin with the intention at Khanikin of linking up with the British. Retreat upon Mosul, by way of Bakuba cut off; the Turkish 13th Corps would be obliged to retire from Kasr-i-Shirin over the difficult mountain road to Kifri. The Turkish military organisation based upon Bagdad had gone to pieces.

While the move upon Bakuba was being made, another was taking place towards Feludja on the Euphrates. As a glance at the map will show, near to Bagdad the two great rivers of Mesopotamia swerve together, and the distance here separating them is not more than twenty miles. Since to command them is to command the communications of the country, it was evident that the occupation of Feludja was insistent. Nor can it be supposed that the enemy would not strongly have opposed this move had he been in a situation to do so. That it met with little opposition was the best possible proof of his difficulties.

The remarkable feature of the three movements just outlined is that they were all completed within a week of the British entry into Bagdad. That event had taken place on March 11; the occupation of Feludja, which completed General Maude's immediate threefold scheme, was effected on March 19. Bakuba had been taken on the preceding day.

Not merely was this display of energy, rounding off the occupation of Bagdad, noteworthy in itself, but it revealed the extent to which river transport had been improved, for though local supplies had been organised, the operations were still in the main dependent on Basra as the chief base and upon the traffic with that place. Any weakness at the base or on the line of supply must have led to delay, and time was here the essence of success.

A striking proof of the fact was speedily afforded. Some twenty miles to the north-east of Bakuba on the road to Khanikin is the little town of Shahraban. It was still occupied by the Turks. Following roughly the course of the Diala the road from Bagdad into Persia

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runs to the larger town of Kizil Robat, the first stage on the caravan journey. Kizil Robat lies in a kind of enclosed plain, an enclave in the highlands, and the Diala, falling from the higher mountains, after traversing this plain issues from it through a gorge or breach in the ridge which divides the enclosed level from the vast tracts of Mesopotamia to the south. The dividing ridge, called the Jebel Hamrin, was held by the enemy in considerable strength. Not alone did the position bar the road to Khanikin; it formed a very convenient jumping-off place in the event of a reaction.

No sooner, therefore, had Feludja been secured, and the bunds north of Bagdad, when a column was concentrated at Bakuba, for further operations in that direction. Moving out on March 20, this force three days later drove the Turks out of Shahraban. The British found there large supplies of grain, part no doubt of the provision for the enemy's troops in Persia. Next day (March 24) they moved against the hostile position on the Jebel Hamrin ridge. The country just here at the foot of the higher levels, still cut up in all directions by ditches and canals, was by no means easy to cross, but in a night attack a hold was established on the foothills. The ridge of Jebel Hamrin is rugged. Beyond the foothills is the first crest, then at a distance of some two miles, but two miles seamed by ravines and hummocks, rises a second and higher crest. The first and lower crest was also gained. Behind the enemy line the lower crest ran across the broken country about a thousand yards to the north and at the foot of the higher rise. In the circumstances it was not judged advisable to press the advance further. Seeing the British retiring, the Turks came out into the open, and at the same time their cavalry, riding through the gorge of the Diala, tried to envelop the British right. That wing was held by the Manchesters. The Turkish horse charged in the hope of breaking them up, but standing with exemplary steadiness, they withered the onset with volleys of rifle and machine-gun fire poured in at close quarters.

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Since the enemy's 13th Corps were in difficulties, the 18th was sent to their aid, and the British having fallen back upon Shahraban, there appeared to be some prospect of avoiding the long and toilsome détour through Kifri by getting out through Kizil Robat and Deltawa, the latter place being on the route to Samarra. By this time, however, Deltawa had been taken by a British detachment. An attempt by part of the 13th Corps to advance from Kizil Robat to Deltawa was made, but it was beaten, and the enemy fell back upon Deli Abbas, followed up by the British cavalry.

To assist the proposed retirement of the 13th Corps from Persia by way of the Tigris, the 18th was drawn up behind the Shatt-el-Adhaim, a tributary of the Tigris flowing in across the flats from the north-east.

A converging movement against the British at Deltawa was evidently the intention. As usual, General Maude resolved to strike first. His plan was, while containing the Deli Abbas force with his cavalry, to attack with a sufficiently strong mobile column the 18th Turkish Corps, who by this time had crossed the Shatt-el-Adhaim. That the hostile intention had been rightly interpreted was shown on March 27 by a determined effort to open the road to Deltawa from Deli Abbas. Harassed by the British cavalry, skilfully handled, the movement was checked, and the Turks, having sustained severe losses, finally fell back, the British cavalry in pursuit.

On the receipt apparently of intelligence that a column was on the march against him, the commander of the 18th Corps deemed it prudent to entrench and await the onset near Himma on the main road to Deltawa from the north-west. His position had been well chosen. On the British side a night assault was determined upon, and took place after darkness on March 28. The fighting proved stubborn. At noon on the following day the action was still undecided. Hostilities had then to be suspended because of a mirage. The phenomenon, falsifying the whole aspect of the country, left

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artillery support out of the question. At sunset, however, the mirage passed off. The renewed British attack carried most of the hostile positions. Counter-attacks were fierce. They added so heavily to the Turkish losses that during the night (March 29-30) what were still left of the defences were abandoned, and the 18th Corps retired across the Shatt-el-Adhaim.

Owing to this defeat of the 18th Corps, the Turks on the upper Diala had now no alternative left save to retreat through Kifri, and on April 2 at Kizil Robat, evacuated by the enemy, the British effected a junction with the troops of General Baratoff.

General Maude now judged it advisable to push his operations yet farther along the Tigris on both banks. The remains of the 13th and 18th Turkish Corps had each been reinforced. His first purpose was to move along the railway towards Samarra, and on April 9 the advance had been carried as far as Harbe. But meanwhile on the other bank the 2nd and 14th Turkish Divisions again made a move towards Deltawa. They came down from Deli Abbas along the Nahr Kalis canal, which, running diagonally across country, links up the Tigris with the Diala. On this occasion, keeping their left flank close to the canal, the Turkish formation was in dense columns, a manœuvre designed to resist attack by cavalry. As before also, the British mounted troops appeared to oppose the enemy's progress, but though this opposition was supported by Horse Artillery, which inflicted rather heavy losses on the close masses, it could not arrest them, for the cavalry were not able to come to close quarters. In a word, the manœuvre looked like being a success, and on April 9 these Turkish troops had pushed forward seven miles. Whether or not the enemy presumed that the British dispositions would remain as before; that the main British force would continue on the Shatt-el-Adhaim, and the movement upon Deltawa from the north-east be resisted as hitherto merely by cavalry, can only be inferred, but clearly the attack upon Deltawa from the north-east was the serious

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thing, and the enemy force on the Shatt-el-Adhaim intended in the interim to keep the British there occupied. At all events General Maude concluded that these were the hostile intentions, and as events proved, his judgment was justified. He met stratagem with stratagem. Screening the movement with his cavalry, still offering an apparently futile opposition, he detached part of the supports of his troops on the Shatt-el-Adhaim, and marching them across country by night, had them the following morning on the exposed right of the Turks moving down by the Nahr Khalis canal. Looking, as they were, for nothing more than continued cavalry skirmishes, this assault by infantry and field guns took the Turks wholly by surprise. Obligated hastily to deploy in the open to meet it, they lost heavily. In face of the casualties and confusion there was nothing for it save to retreat. The pursuit was continued as far as Deli Abbas, from which place the enemy was ejected.

Though on a small scale these operations afford an instructive example of skill in manœuvre.

The thrust from Delhi Abbas disposed of, General Maude turned his attention once more to the 18th Corps. On April 18 the Shatt-el-Adhaim was bridged. When that had been accomplished and the British infantry had crossed the river the Turks began to fall back. But a composite brigade of cavalry was launched in chase, and the retreat rapidly became a rout. Losing 1,300 prisoners, in addition to killed and wounded, the 18th Corps was broken up. Only a small fraction of the troops composing it made good their escape.

There was now on the Bagdad side of the river no longer for the time being any Turkish force of any consequence. On the opposite side, however, towards Samarra, the enemy still had troops reported to consist of some 10,700 infantry, about 700 cavalry, and 46 guns, based upon Samarra with an advanced position among the ruins of Istabulat. Not the strength of the force was the problem, but the position chosen. The great bend in the course of the Tigris, avoided as it were by

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the railway, is also for the purposes of river transport shortened by the Dujail canal. That cut leaves the Tigris not far below Samarra at an acute angle, runs fairly straight across country, and strikes the river again some ten miles above Bagdad. In places the canal is carried between high embankments, and the railway is laid roughly parallel with it on the west side. Extending from the Tigris to the canal near their junction at Samarra and where the distance between the two is some three miles, the Turkish line cut off a triangle of ground fairly secure at all events on the land side, for the canal embankments were there some forty feet in height. And attack, too, was difficult from the river because of the hairpin turn at the point where the enemy's left rested on the waterway. His right, on reaching the canal embankment, was carried along it. The position was a strong one.

On the part of the British, when the advance had been carried as far as Istabulat (April 21) the plan was first to attack the Turkish line facing downstream at the end where it rested on the river, and at the opposite end where it adjoined the canal. At the latter point those old comrades in arms the Black Watch and the Gurkhas, moving forward together, covered by a creeping barrage, secured a firm footing in the defences. Near the river the Turks at the same time lost the redoubt which had formed one of their main points of support. These breaches having been made on that front, the line along the canal embankment was attacked by the Seaforth Highlanders and the 28th and 92nd Punjabis. They had to advance in the open across more than a mile of exposed ground, but, displaying the greatest gallantry, broke the hostile line over a width of 700 yards. The resistance had been tenacious, and it was still possible owing to the natural and artificial strength of the position to defend it. Content therefore for the time being with the breaches effected, the British commander prepared methodically to push the attack from these jumping-off points under the cover of darkness. Possibly this purpose was suspected, for soon after

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darkness the Turks, whose losses had been even more severe than supposed, began an evacuation.

At daybreak the whole British force was on the move in pursuit. The chase, continued as far as Samarra, resulted in the capture of 14 Krupp guns, 16 locomotives, 240 trucks, 2 barges, and besides numerous rifles, a large stock of ammunition and miscellaneous equipment. Samarra station was captured on April 23 and the town occupied on April 24.

Aerial reconnaissance now left it beyond doubt that the enemy retirement was general on both banks of the river. Into the details of the clearing up it is not necessary to enter. Suffice it to say that Sir Stanley Maude had not merely in taking Bagdad scored a political success; he had in breaking up the Turko-German power in Mesopotamia won a solid military triumph.

But it had been a trying campaign for the British troops. The distances to be covered, the heat, the dust storms, the scarcity on occasions of water, called for physical exertion of no ordinary kind. Nevertheless, as their gallant General recorded, "the spirit of the troops seemed to rise as conditions became more trying, and to the end of this period they maintained the same high standard of discipline, gallantry in action and endurance."

There were now before them five months of hot weather during which active campaigning was impracticable. While no necessary precautions were neglected, most were withdrawn into reserve, and distributed along the river in camps "where a liberal supply of water for drinking, bathing and washing was obtainable." In camp manly sports were encouraged, training carried on in the early mornings and late evenings when the weather was cool enough, and to long service men periods of leave granted to India. Coincidentally the defensive arrangements and organisation securing the British occupation of the country were strengthened and completed.

The Turks still remained in occupation of Ramadie

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on the Euphrates. They had there some 1,500 regular and 2,000 irregular troops, the latter Arabs of the Delaim tribe. Ramadie is rather more than twenty miles up the Euphrates from Feludja, and on the opposite bank. Between the two places at the point where on the Feludja side the Saklawiya canal leaves the river, there are some hummocks of rising ground called Sinn-el-Zibban. These it was judged advisable to occupy, and it was determined to carry out both that move and an attack upon Ramadie early in July. Since it was out of the question to execute long marches in the summer heats, both motor vans and lorries were provided to carry a part of the Column, so that men might alternately march and ride, and very careful provision was made as regarded the supply of water and of ice. Setting out from Feludja, an advance guard on July 8 occupied Sinn-el-Zibban. While they made exact reconnaissances towards Ramadie, twelve miles farther on, the main Column was concentrated behind the mounds. The march from Sinn-el-Zibban to Ramadie took place on the night of July 10. By four the following morning contact had been established with the enemy's advance posts and these driven in. The operations, however, were at this point interrupted by a dust storm of unusual severity, accompanied by a heat wave, and those conditions continued until July 14. In the circumstances the contemplated attack had to be abandoned. The Column withdrew to Sinn-el-Zibban.

But the enterprise was not given up. On the contrary, preparations were made to carry it through on a larger scale, for it was now certain that the enemy, put upon the alert, would as speedily as possible reinforce his garrison. Preparations occupied the interval until September 26. Their effect showed that little time after all had been lost. The end of September was the beginning of the campaigning season.

Like that at Istabulat on the Tigris, the position at Ramadie lent itself to effective defence. The reach of the Euphrates from Ramadie to Feludja runs west to east. South of the course of the river, and distant

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from it between five and eight miles, there is an extensive salt lake, the Habbaniya. A mile or so west of Ramadie a canal, the Aziziya, leaves the Euphrates and follows a southerly direction until lost in the salt marsh at its western end. Near the eastern end of the marsh, and extending south to north from lake to river is the Mushaid ridge, some 60 feet in height. There were therefore three ways of arriving at the town; first by crossing the Euphrates at some point between the Mushaid ridge and the Aziziya canal; secondly by assaulting and capturing the ridge; thirdly by making a detour to the west and forcing a passage over the canal.

In view of these features of the area the Turkish commander held the Mushaid ridge with part of his force as an advance guard, but realising that from the west there might be delivered an attack which, if successful, would cut off his retreat he kept the main body of his troops on a front drawn closely round the east and south of the town. The ground there, between the Euphrates and the salt lake, was an expanse of bare sandy downs—the Aziziya canal on one side, and the Euphrates Valley canal, roughly parallel with the river, on the other.

The British plan was this. In the first place measures were taken for leading the Turkish General to believe that the chief attack was to take place from across the river. A road was laid down along the opposite bank, and supplies were collected at the most convenient point for crossing. Rather lower downstream a bridge of boats had been constructed, and over this part of the British column passed from the Ramadie side to the farther bank. Such were the preparations up to the evening of September 27.

During that night, however, these troops were withdrawn and recrossed the Euphrates. The real attack was to be delivered at the southern end of the Mushaid ridge where that hummock abutted on the lake. The cavalry were to move forward as far as the road from Ramadie to Hit and Aleppo, and cut the enemy's communications.

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At dawn on September 28 the southern end of the Mushaid ridge was attacked, and a foothold on that part won. The Euphrates Valley canal runs past the rise at this southern end. Across the canal a dam had been constructed broad enough for the passage of both troops and guns. The dam was secured, and a body of British infantry marched over.

The ridge had now been turned, as intended, and that fact led the enemy to evacuate the rise and fall back upon his defences among the sand dunes. The British infantry followed him up along the northern shore of the lake. Their movement screened by the Mushaid ridge, the cavalry manœuvred to the left wing of the advance, and while the infantry, supported by the guns, approached and opened an attack upon the southern face of the enemy's main position, the horse, crossing the Aziziya canal near its junction with the lake, wheeled to the north and made for the Aleppo road. The effect of this move lay in its rapidity. Quite possibly the enemy may have supposed that to deliver an attack from the west it would be necessary to make a détour round the lake, a distance of at least thirty miles. Such a movement would not only have occupied a whole day, it would have left the mounted force too exhausted for further immediate operations. Thus there appeared to be a loophole, but when, instead, the British cavalry cut across the northern edge of the lake, a distance of not more than ten miles, they not only arrived west of the Aziziya canal fully fit for further activity, but saved a whole day.

And this manœuvre was accompanied by another complementary of it. The infantry had pushed on from the Mushaid ridge in two columns, the Column on the left slightly in advance. It was the Left Column which opened the assault. Aided by the character of the ground the enemy's opposition was stiff. All the same, the Left Column seized part of the defences and consolidated the position. In these operations, though all the troops engaged displayed admirable gallantry, the Dorsets and 5th Gurkhas particularly distinguished

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themselves and earned a mention in despatches. By this time it was early evening, and as the action had begun at dawn, and the troops had been on foot during part of the preceding night, the assault was not further pressed. If the enemy was left under the impression that his resistance had been in the main successful, so much the better. When darkness came on the Right Column passing in rear was transferred to the left of the line, and at dawn delivered a renewed attack along the Aziziya embankment. They made good their footing.

As it stood on the evening of September 28 the situation was that the Turkish force occupied a triangle, the northern side of it the bank of the Euphrates; the south-eastern side his line across the sand dunes; the south-western what was still left of his defences along the Aziziya canal. His only possible way out, therefore, was through Ramadie, at the north-western corner, along the Aleppo road. The Aleppo road, however, was now obstructed by the British cavalry, while on the south-east face and part of the south-west of his main position he was held by the infantry.

It is not surprising in the circumstances that retreat had been resolved upon. Evidently it was believed that the Turkish troops could still break through the British cavalry. At three in the morning the Turks in massed formation debouched from Ramadie on the Aleppo road. The fight was hot, for the effort to break through was resolute. But the British horse, besides exhibiting great dash in attack, were strongly supported by Horse Artillery and batteries of Hotchkiss guns. The enemy's losses were severe. After the fighting had gone on for an hour and a half and it became plain that no retreat could be effected save as a rout, he withdrew again into the town.

While these events to the west were in progress the attack of the British infantry was resumed and delivered against the south-eastern face of the triangle and along the embankment of the canal. By half-past seven in the morning the 39th Garhwalis seized the

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bridge carrying the Aleppo route over the canal. The Turks in Ramadie were now sealed up.

The attack was pressed from this west side of the town. During the struggle for the bridge—the Turks posted to defend it fought to the last and those not killed or wounded were taken prisoners—the 90th Punjabis entered Ramadie, and, pushing eastwards, reached the Turkish headquarters. There the enemy commander, Ahmed Bey, surrendered. No formal capitulation occurred. It had become a question of rounding up the remnants of the Turkish force, demoralised alike by the rapidity of the onset and its developments. An hour before noon all had been made prisoners. There were 3,454.

More important, however, than the prisoners were the captures of material. These included railway material and supplies; engineering stores; reserves of arms and munitions; two barges and two armed launches; and 13 guns besides machine-guns. The captures were important because they crippled ability to prosecute the campaign. Transport of military equipment from Aleppo to places on the Euphrates was both slow and difficult. Under the most favourable conditions months would have to elapse before the enemy could make good this loss.

Simultaneously with the operations at Ramadie the cavalry with the British forces on the Bagdad side of the Tigris had by a bold move from Deltawa through Bakuba struck north-east to Mendali on the Persian border. This small town, a Turkish frontier post lying at the foot of the Pusht-i-Kuh mountains, had been used as a minor base of supplies, and had proved of value in organising raids on the Tigris line of communications. The British cavalry dash, though it meant a ride of more than sixty miles, was accomplished for the most part during the night of April 28–29. Surprised by the apparition of these mounted troops, early in the morning of April 29 the Turks holding Mendali attempted no resistance, and fled at once into the hills. But they had been given no time to make away with the

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supplies the town contained. Among the most useful captures were 300 baggage camels. This stroke disposed of the last vestige of Turkish force in Mesopotamia between Ramadie on the one side and Kifri on the other.

Not alone, however, had Turkish power been abolished; British authority substituted for it had been steadily consolidated. The work of re-organisation initiated at Basra was beginning to show fruit, and was reflected alike in the health and efficiency of the army of occupation and in the regularity of the administration and resultant tranquillity.

Above all, the river transport had continued to improve. At the same time, additional lines of railway had been laid down. Extended though they had been, the facilities afforded by the port of Basra had become insufficient. They were accordingly further enlarged by the construction of a supplemental port on lines advised by a Committee on the spot.

Looking at it as a whole, the work achieved by Sir Stanley Maude had been as thorough as it had been brilliant. On his arrival the Turkish power appeared to have entered upon a new lease of vitality. He had done more than destroy it; building upon the foundations of his predecessors Nixon and Lake, who, though their tasks had been left unfinished, had proceeded on sound principles, he had reared a solid structure. The army was efficient and in good health; the native population content. Diseases like cholera, enteric, scurvy and dysentery, which had taken a heavy toll of the troops during the earlier stages of the campaign, had been reduced to a minimum or stamped out. It is not alone fertility and brilliance of resource which mark out the commander of genius; it is the capacity incidentally of taking infinite pains as to details.

Maude had toiled hard; how hard few save his subordinates knew. It was his unflinching care which led to his untimely decease, a public calamity hardly to be estimated, for the needs of war had in him discovered a great soldier. Though in the camps cholera cases had become few, there were spots in the country

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where among the civil population the scourge lingered. Keenly concerned in the measures for dealing with it, the General made a tour of these districts. The gratitude of the inhabitants was marked.

At the conclusion of this tour General Maude attended at Bagdad a fête at which most of the influential residents of the city assisted. The function, a performance of "Hamlet" by scholars of the Jewish school, had been arranged in his honour. In accordance with native custom coffee was set before him, and as a sign of regard for English usages, sugar and milk. The General drank the coffee after having diluted it with the milk. Next day he had the symptoms of acute cholera. In five days he was dead. He had refused inoculation, considering it in his own case and at his age—he was fifty-four—unnecessary. Unwittingly he had sealed his work with his life. Outside the Old North Gate of the city he was buried with the military honours he had so well won, his burial place surrounded by men who, having shared with him the perils and fatigues of battle and rejoiced with him in victory, now mourned him as a great, fearless, and kindly spirit, the true type of the British soldier. The Command in Mesopotamia was placed in the capable hands of General Marshall. To earlier distinctions General Marshall had just added the conduct of the operations at Ramadie.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE CAMPAIGN IN SYRIA

Offensive in support of Mesopotamia operations—Battle of El Arish—British advance to Rafa—Physical features of southern Syria—Turkish defences in Palestine—Haste of the British preparations—First British attack upon Gaza—Reasons for its defeat—Plans of General Allenby—Their daring—Naval co-operation—Three months of preparation—Enemy's counter-moves—British attack on Beersheba—A successful surprise—Rapid developments—Feint assault upon Gaza—Seizure of the Tuweil Abu Jerwal ridge—Enemy defences at Ruweika and Rushdi carried—Turning of the Turks' fortified front—The action at Kuweilfe—Turks evacuate Gaza—Hostile forces divided—British advance to Jaffa—Turkish reverse at El Kubab—Capture of the Nebi Samwal ridge—Turning movement through Hebron—Turkish garrison in Jerusalem cut off—Surrender of the city—A brilliant campaign.

FOLLOWING upon the repulse of the second Sinai enterprise in June and July, 1916, no further German-Turkish attempt took place against the Suez Canal defences. Nevertheless, the enemy remained in possession of El Arish on the coast, and therefore within easy striking distance should his affairs elsewhere warrant renewal of activity. His handicap, as always, was non-command of the sea. That handicap notwithstanding, the presence of the Turks in the Sinai peninsula formed an unpleasant menace.

In January, 1917, the operations against Kut, combined with the suppression of the movement of the Senussi on the west, influenced the British Government to pass in Sinai to the offensive. Assuming it to be successful, the movement would both assist the British attack in Mesopotamia and safeguard Egypt.

Towards the end of January the forces under the

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command of Sir Archibald Murray moved against the enemy at El Arish and gained a complete victory. The Turkish garrison there was destroyed and its stores and equipment captured.

So rapid a stroke had not been looked for. Preparations too had been made for pushing the British advance as far as Rafa, and for supporting it by the construction of a light railway. Rafa is on the coast at the extreme north-east corner of Sinai, and just within the nominal Egyptian boundary.

Covered by Australian Light Horse and by Camelry, the march along the coast route was swift. The British force could move comparatively light since it was able to rely upon accompanying shipping for supplies. Rafa was reached and seized before the enemy could reinforce. In possession of that important post the British in laying their line of railway were secure against molestation. They were thus able to convert Rafa into an advanced base.

But the enemy naturally had also made the best use of the interval. While contemplating attack upon Egypt, he had not neglected to provide against the possibility of counter-attack. All the more had he been urged towards those precautions because of past failures.

To follow the operations in Syria it is necessary to note the leading physical features of the southern area of that great province. The district of Palestine contiguous to the Mediterranean is a long, narrow plain. East of this plain, inland and roughly parallel with the coast, is a broad ridge of tableland, its surface undulated. Its western face towards the plain is scored by defiles, for the most part with steep and rocky declivities. In the rainy season these wadis, as they are called, are the beds of roaring torrents; in the dry season tracks of broken rocks and stones. Roads practicable for wheeled traffic from the coastal plain to the highlands are few. The main cross route of that character runs from Jaffa to Jerusalem.

East of the Palestine ridge occurs the strange pro-

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found trough of Jordan, the Dead Sea, nearly 1,300 feet below sea level, marking its lowest depth. The abrupt drop from the Palestine ridge into this valley is in places 2,000 feet. On the farther side of the valley rises the western face of the great plateau of Moab. To the south the trough is continued towards the Red Sea, dividing the arid uplands of Arabia from those of Sinai.

At the southern end of the Palestine ridge the coastal plain broadens and extends inland. The depression, fertile and under cultivation, marks Palestine off from the desert of Sinai, to the south-west. This level expanse is also itself marked off from the Palestine ridge by the wadi or valley of the Ghuzze, a considerable river which skirts round the southern foot of the ridge, from Beersheba to the Mediterranean. From the valley of the Ghuzze at a point about ten miles from the coast branches off to north-east the Wadi es Sheria. Between the two valleys there is a triangle of rugged country. The peculiarity of these wadis is their perpendicular sides. They are less valleys in the ordinary sense of the word than broad cracks worn by the water in the stony soil, and form military obstacles of some difficulty.

Situated at the point of an outlying westerly spur of the Palestine ridge, and where the coastal plain is narrowest, Gaza forms a kind of gateway barring advance from Sinai to the north. Gaza had been converted into a fortress of the first class, surrounded by earthworks among the sand dunes lying between the town and the coast, and by works on the heights behind it. All these defences were heavily wired in. But along the spur extending inland, and in the triangle of country between the Wadi es Sheria and the Wadi Ghuzze, other defences had been laid out. They extended indeed as far as Beersheba, nearly thirty miles from the sea. To Beersheba there is a mule track from Rafa, and then through the hills northwards to Hebron a mountain road, but too rugged for wheeled traffic. It is not until Hebron, twenty-five miles north of Beer-

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sheba, is reached that this road, continued to Jerusalem, becomes practicable for vehicles. Beersheba owes its existence to its wells.

Formerly the road from Gaza to Beersheba was as indifferent as that from Beersheba to Hebron, but to link up the various defences the Turks had, under the supervision of German engineers, converted the Gaza-Beersheba track into an excellent motor route, well paved and greatly straightened. It was a laborious and expensive piece of work, but, as a lateral communication, of great military utility.

An attack upon such a system of defences perched on a range of rugged hills and with a river in front of them was a serious undertaking; doubly so if they were held in strength. Nor could attack hope to succeed without adequate preparation.

The preparations were hurried, and from two causes.

First, not yet understanding the thoroughness of General Maude's work in Mesopotamia, and looking rather to the occupation of Bagdad and its political effects than to the destruction of the enemy's military resources, there was on the part of the British Government at home what proved to be an unwarranted apprehension as to the possibilities of a Turkish reaction. The real conditions governing the campaign in Mesopotamia were even now not fully grasped. Nor was it yet realised that Maude was tearing up Turkish power in Mesopotamia by the roots. It was judged, therefore, advisable to push the operations in Syria with all speed as one preventive of a Turkish rebound in the north.

Secondly, the rapid success of the Syria operations up to this point had bred, just as those of Townshend had done, confidence where there ought to have been caution. The difficulties on the spot were under-rated.

Thus hastened, the attack on the Palestine defences took place in April. Not caring to hazard his force far from the coast, having regard to its distance from Egypt proper and its dependence upon seaborne supplies, Sir Archibald Murray formed the plan of directing

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his main onset against Gaza, and of assisting it by a diversion along the Wadi Ghuzze, by that means covering his right flank. The enemy's tactics, it turned out, were at Gaza to stand upon the defensive, and to throw the chief weight of a Turkish counter-thrust against the British right. It mattered little even should the British get into Gaza; they could not remain there if the Turks on the British right succeeded in cutting in between the Expeditionary Force and the Rafa base. In fact, if the British could not fight their way out of Gaza they would be entrapped. These tactics of the enemy were bold, but sound.

The assault upon Gaza met with what appeared to be complete success. The defences facing south-west were carried by storm, and the troops penetrated into the town. But the mobile column covering the British right, hopelessly outnumbered, could not resist the weight of the enemy force thrown against it. As the Turkish commander had shrewdly foreseen, Gaza had hastily to be evacuated. The British were compelled to fall back, attacked both in flank and rear. Nothing indeed but the valour of the troops saved the situation, and nothing but the Turks' heavy losses prevented the enemy from pressing his advantage right home. This was a British failure, however, and an expensive one. For three days, during which the British slowly fell back, the Turks spared no effort. It was the reckless character of their attacks which in the end frustrated their design. While obliged to retire upon the lines from which they had set out in this phase of the operations, and for the time being immobilised there, the British had so far punished the enemy that he too was forced to remain inactive. That state of things lasted throughout the next three months.

The Commandership-in-Chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force was transferred to General Sir E. H. H. Allenby, marked out by his achievements in the campaign in France. He had orders, on arriving in Egypt at the end of June, 1917, to report on the conditions under which offensive operations against the Turks in

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Palestine might be resumed during the ensuing autumn or winter. His proposals, which were approved, were submitted after a visit to the front and a personal examination of the position.

In the meanwhile the obstacles to be overcome had grown more formidable. Between Gaza and Beersheba the enemy had constructed six groups of works, each in a commanding tactical position. Distant from each other by not more than 2,000 yards, and therefore capable of mutual support, the interlying groups or systems were at Sihan, Atawineh, Baha, Abu Hareira, Rushdi and Ruweika. The excellent lateral communications between Gaza and Beersheba appeared to render all the defences yet more secure. Nevertheless, to increase insurance the enemy had not only in the interval linked up the groups by lines of trenches, thus presenting an uninterrupted front, but had raised his force to nine divisions of infantry and one of cavalry, a total of some 180,000 men. Assuredly to attack such a line of fortifications with a numerically smaller force looked on the face of it an impossible undertaking.

Separated as they were from Egypt proper by the whole width of the Sinai desert, the British troops were limited as regards numbers by the supplies which could be transported, and they were not less limited by the water problem. Indeed the problem of water was the more difficult of the two. One object of the enemy had been to keep the British Force in a position where wells were few. He on his side had no water question to contend against. His communications too were altogether more adequate. There was the main railway from Damascus to rely upon. A branch of that line extended down to Jaffa, and the railhead there had been linked by a military light railway with Gaza. Another branch of the main railway was east of Jordan carried south along the plateau of Moab, past the Dead Sea and on to the Yemen, with Mecca as its southern terminus. Had it been presently or prospectively a commercial project this line would assuredly have been laid along the inhabited districts of the

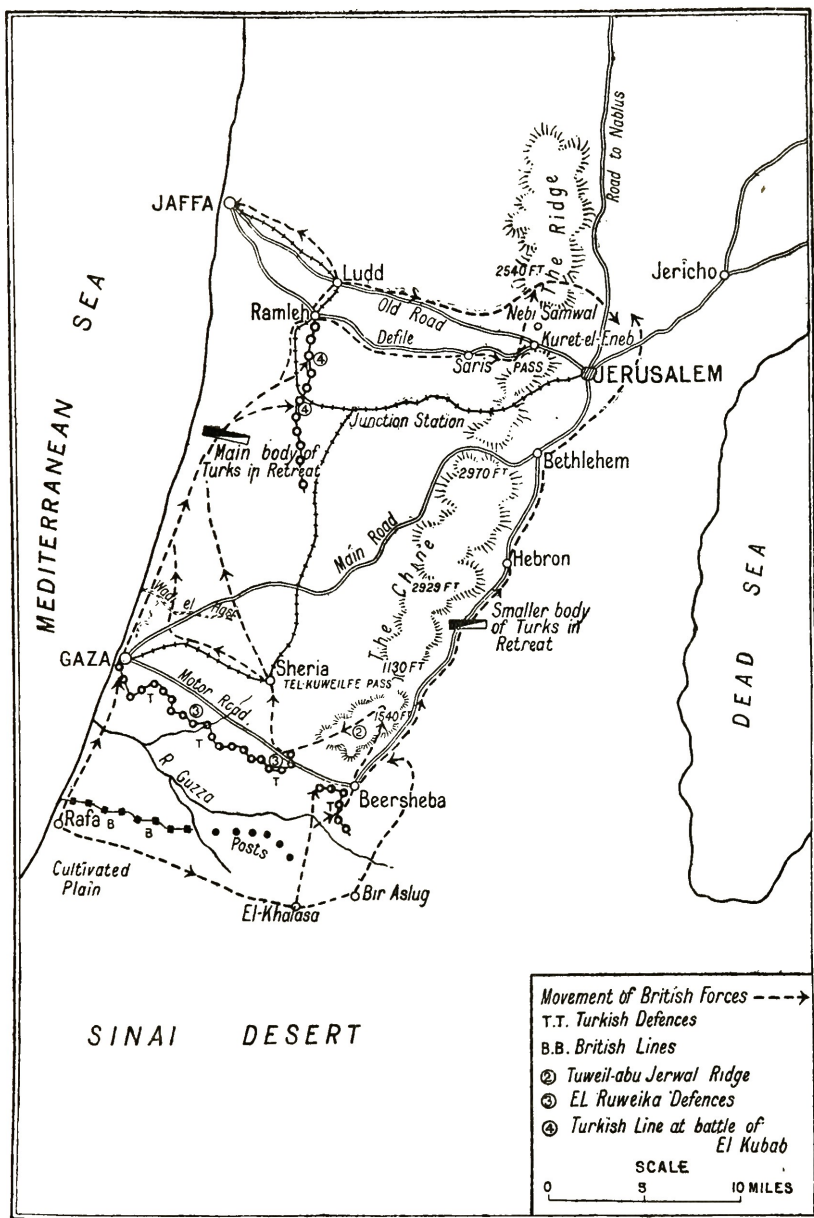
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plateau close by the ancient north and south road, some ten miles on an average east of the Dead Sea shores on that side. The line, however, had been constructed another twenty miles or more on the average farther east through desert solitudes, public utility being sacrificed to security against attack.

A commander less resolute than General Allenby might well have been deterred by these prospects. But a study of the situation had revealed just one weak place in the hostile dispositions. Between the Ruweika defences and those round Beersheba there was a gap of some four and a half miles. This stretch of the country was lofty and rugged, so rugged that regular fortification would have been superfluous. Nevertheless the possibility at any rate existed, if the defences of Beersheba could be seized, of turning the enemy's left flank, and of delivering the real attack upon Gaza from the east and north-east; that is, of turning also the main defences of the fortress. Assuming success, followed up with sufficient rapidity, an advantage of this plan was that the Turkish forces holding the interlying systems of defences, if not cut off, would be forced to evacuate them. Further, the capture of the wells at Beersheba would go far towards easing the water difficulties.

To ensure success, however, the attack upon Beersheba would have to be carried out as a surprise, and to make it a surprise a feint assault had to be arranged against Gaza in the first instance, so that the enemy reserves might not be transferred to the opposite extreme of the line.

The plan was daring, but this was a situation in which, above all, resource was called for. One advantage of the British over the enemy was the larger proportion of mobile and mounted troops. Uncovered by the capture of the Beersheba defences, the enemy's left flank would be exposed, and the attack might be developed with a speed affording the Turks no opportunity to rally. The defences at Beersheba were, too, not only easier to approach than any of the others, but



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less elaborate and formidable. Apparently it had been supposed that the British would not venture upon so wide a *détour*.

Another circumstance which contributed to mislead the hostile command was the support of the British Expedition by the Naval squadron under the orders of Rear-Admiral T. Jackson. That able and alert officer and his staff worked in the closest conjunction with the land forces. An assault upon Gaza, prepared for and backed by the guns of the warships, was not an operation the Turks could afford to take lightly.

In the meantime it was evident that the whole success or failure of the British scheme turned upon arrangements for transport and the supply of the main attacking force. On setting out the force would have to carry with it supplies for at least six days. The force having to operate over country without roads practicable for wheeled traffic, these supplies must be carried upon pack animals.

There were not with the Expedition more than enough for such a purpose.

The preparations occupied the months of July, August, and September. They included the transport across Sinai of additional batteries of heavy and siege guns; the laying of branch military railways from Rafa to Karm-el-Adabi, some ten miles inland, and from Deir-el-Belah, a small coast town half-way between Rafa and Gaza, across country to the Wadi Ghuzze. Depots of supplies and munitions had to be formed at the railheads.

On the enemy's side there were counter-preparations. New military railways from Gaza to the north-east and east were laid down; further munition depots formed north of Gaza along the coast; and more reinforcements drafted to this front. The work of elaborating the defences went steadily forward. Those round Beersheba were now strengthened and extended.

October 31 had been decided upon by General Allenby as the date of the Beersheba attack. El Khalasa and Bir Asluj, two points about ten miles south of Beersheba, and on the edge of the Sinai uplands, were to be

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the starting places of the mounted troops. There were wells at both places. These were enlarged and improved. It was part of the scheme of attack that the mounted men were to make a *détour* round Beersheba to the east and north-east, and push in upon the rear of the place from the hills.

On October 27 the land bombardment of the south-western defences of Gaza was opened. Desiring to ascertain apparently what exactly this bombardment portended, the enemy on that day threw forward reconnaissance raids of the British line inland. He dispatched a mobile column, two regiments of cavalry, and three battalions of infantry with guns towards Karm. Covering Karm and El Girheir, where the laying of the railway was still in progress, was a line of British outposts held by yeomanry. The defence offered was obstinate. One of the line of posts was taken, and the detachment holding it destroyed; but another, though completely surrounded, held out all day, beating off attack after attack. This enabled the 53rd (Welsh) Division to be moved up. On their appearance the enemy retired.

For the next two days the bombardment of the Gaza works by the land batteries continued. On the fourth day of the bombardment (October 30) the warships joined in.

Did the enemy as yet suspect, notwithstanding this gunfire on his right, that the real assault was to take place on the left of his line? Seemingly he did not. It is extremely probable that the bombardment fully fulfilled its purpose. During October 30 the concentration for the attack upon Beersheba was completed.

There was to be a night march from the jumping-off places to the south. The concentration was carried through well up to time.

In addition to the Mounted Column detailed to execute the turning movement through the hills to the east, the force told off for the attack was two divisions and a brigade (part of the 53rd Division) of infantry, the Imperial Camel Corps, and a regiment of cavalry.

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Beersheba lies in a recess in the hills on the north side of the Wadi es Seba, a confluent of the Ghuzze. On the south side of the valley rises the Abu Shaar ridge, nearly 1,000 feet high. The ridge had been strongly fortified. It was the intention to assault and carry it from the western end.

To reach Beersheba from the south or south-west it is necessary to cross a succession of smaller wadis. The night march was, notwithstanding, carried through without a hitch. On the right of the force were the cavalry; on the left the camelry supported by a brigade of the 53rd. These troops on the left were to demonstrate against the defences north of the Wadi es Seba.

By daybreak the advanced defences had been reached. They were after a short bombardment assaulted by London troops, and carried. This enabled the field guns to be brought within range of the hostile main line. Here the works had been strongly wired in, and the cutting of the wire with shrapnel occupied most of the forenoon. Just after midday the attack was thrown forward. In less than an hour the ridge, which formed the key of the defences, had been taken. Though exposed to a very accurate artillery fire the troops showed unshakable steadiness; once in the enemy positions they cleared them with an irresistible sweep. The losses were light.

It was now possible to attack from the south and end on the works, north of the Wadi es Seba, covering Beersheba on the west, and that was at once done. It occupied the afternoon. The back of the defence, however, had been broken. The resistance was patchy.

The attack upon Beersheba had in fact proved a surprise, and the surprise was completed when the same evening and coincidentally with the final clearance of the western defences the Australian Light Horse rode into the town from the east. To arrive at the rendezvous, Khasim Zanna, in the hills five miles to the east, part of the mounted column had ridden in the night 35 and another part 25 miles. A detachment of the force was sent north along the Hebron road to

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secure Bir es Sakaty, and prevent a counter-surprise from that direction. Debouching from the hills, the main body found themselves in a stretch of flat country which they had to cross. Overlooking this flat expanse, near Beersheba, and at the junction of two valleys, is an isolated hill, called the Tel-el-Seba. It was held by the enemy in some strength, and the defence showed determination. By afternoon, however, the mounted column had seized the position.

Of the Turkish force holding Beersheba 2,000 were taken prisoners. The losses otherwise were so heavy—some 500 Turkish dead were buried on the battlefield—that, as General Allenby recorded, the force was put almost completely out of action. The loss left the Turkish left flank exposed.

While no time was to be lost in developing the success at Beersheba, it formed part of that development that the enemy should be held at Gaza. The defences there fronting towards the coast extended across the sand dunes in several lines of redoubts linked up by trenches. The dunes are high, more like hills than hummocks, and the sand loose and deep. It had been a considerable labour to establish the fortifications. In the bombardment from sea and land they had been badly knocked about, and the losses of the Turks holding them were heavy. One division of enemy troops, it was afterwards ascertained, had had to be withdrawn and replaced.

The infantry attack had been fixed for November 2, and that date had been decided upon because it was intended to launch the renewed assault against the left of the Turkish line on November 3. To draw as many as possible of the immediately available Turkish reserves into Gaza, and to prevent enemy forces from being moved from that point towards Beersheba, was the substantial object.

Having, before the hostile lines at Gaza could be reached, a distance to go of from one to nearly two miles over heavy sandy ground with stiff declivities, the troops set out early, and while it was yet dark.

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The front of the attack, some 6,000 yards in breadth, extended from Sheik Hasan on the coast transversely across the dunes south-east to Umbrella Hill. This last position formed a kind of bastion jutting out from the hostile main line and therefore enfilading any attack. Assault upon it was made a preliminary, and it had, shortly before midnight, been stormed and taken by part of the 52nd (Lowland) Division. That procedure simplified the larger operation.

Timed for three in the morning the latter proved successful. Sheik Hasan was captured, and the defences over the whole of the front attacked with the exception of some last line positions which still held out in the centre. This meant that if the enemy was now to keep the British out of Gaza, he must reinforce there and without delay.

Operations at the Beersheba end of the line had not meanwhile been suspended. Though some further preparations had to be carried out, and the water question dealt with, a move had been made on November 1. The Mountain Column was sent north-east to secure El-Dhaheriyeh, half way on the road to Hebron, and a junction of secondary routes of some importance. At the same time, the 53rd Division and the Camel Corps pushed from Beersheba due north into the hills. The purpose of this move was, as it were, to keep open the door for the impending flanking pressure. Just north of Beersheba begins the backbone of the Palestine ridge. The chine runs nearly south to north. The southern apex, Tuweil Abu Jerwal, 1,505 feet in height, had become a tactical position of, in the circumstances, no slight consequence. In the enemy's hands this summit and the chine might prove, if not an impregnable, at any rate a formidable barrier. To seize it forthwith before it could be occupied by him was essential. The surprise at Beersheba, followed by the rapidity of this next move, enabled the seizure to be made.

There is at Tel Kuweilfe, some miles farther to the north, a break in the chine forming a pass from east to west. Mounted troops had been pushed forward to

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secure the position. But the enemy, now on the alert, was already there in force. Indeed he essayed to turn the tables, and pass to the offensive. Bringing up all his available reserves, he made, during November 4 and 5, several attempts to dislodge the mounted troops who, though they could not get through it, had barred the eastern outlet of the pass. These attacks did not succeed.

Notwithstanding the pressure at Gaza the Turkish reserves which had been thrown into this fighting were parts of the 19th, 27th, and 16th Divisions.

It was the opinion of General Allenby that hostile concentration at Tel Kuweilfe and to the north of that point was intended to confuse and delay his plan of operations. Possibly enough it was, but whatever the enemy's motive the British commander decided to make no change in his procedure. Having secured the Tuweil Abu Jerwal part of the chine, his intention was to assault forthwith and in flank the Ruweika group of defences lying just to the west of it along a lower rise, running south-east to north-west, and commanding the motor route. He intended to attack towards Tel Kuweilfe at the same time.

Both attacks succeeded. That at Ruweika opened by the yeomanry, who with great dash assaulted the outlying works on the east of the system, was developed by London and Irish battalions, who, taking the rest of the defences in enfilade, speedily cleared them. So rapid indeed was the progress of the attack that the next group farther to the west, the Rushdi system, was also captured.

From Ruweika across country to Sheria, the position covering Gaza from the east, was not more than five miles. While the operations at Rushdi were going on, the yeomanry struck towards Sheria, and reached the valley at that place. The infantry followed as soon as possible. By nightfall Sheria railway station was in their hands.

Beyond doubt this succession of attacks constituted a fine feat of arms. The defences wrested from the

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enemy on this day had covered altogether a front of seven miles. Some 600 Turks were taken prisoners and guns and machine-guns captured.

The attack turned the Kuweilfe position. To the 53rd Division, told off for the operations there, the enemy offered a stubborn opposition. The Welshmen stormed a hill commanding the pass, lost it in a counter-attack, retook it, and another hill behind it at the same time, and made good their footing. They had kept a good part of the enemy's reserves here engaged just as another part of his force was held at Gaza. In between at Sheria, the point that mattered, he was left weak. While the way was open General Allenby made the most of the chance by striking in and cutting the Turkish army into two parts. His mounted troops, kept in readiness for the purpose, were launched in pursuit towards Huj and Jemmamah to the north-west, closing the roads from Gaza to Jerusalem. Divided from the force at and to the north of Kuweilfe, nothing was now left for the Turks still holding Gaza and the defensive groups at Atawineh and Baha save to retire along the coast, while the remainder of the Turkish force was driven inland to the north-east.

The Turks in Gaza and in these more westerly defences had, however, already realised that it was time to be gone. A second British "holding" attack on the remaining Gaza defences had been fixed for the night of November 6-7, for since November 3 the bombardment had been kept up. The opposition proved to be slight, and in fact no more than a blind to screen evacuation. That had taken place during the night. The assault fixed for dawn found most of the defences deserted.

Meanwhile the operations against the remains of the hostile front to the east of Gaza were being pressed. At daybreak on November 7 the Hareira group of works was taken, and Sheria at the same time.

Thus in the course of one week was swept away what had appeared to be one of the most formidable and extensive mazes of fortifications ever elaborated, and

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judged by the enemy to be impregnable. The feat was a signal example of military skill and audacity, for the attacking force was numerically the smaller of the two. But the weak spot had been discovered, and the enemy given no time to recover. Laid out after many months of labour and at enormous cost, these miles of fortified front had literally been crumpled up.

Another phase of the operations was entered upon—that of the pursuit.

For the time being it was certain that, since both the railway and road routes between Gaza and Jerusalem had been cut, the divided fragments of the enemy forces could not reunite save well to the north. To emphasise this striking military advantage to the British force was now a primary aim.

The nearest point at which possibly, north of Gaza, the enemy might attempt a stand was the Wadi Hesi, where another western spur of the main ridge came close to the coast, broken besides by the inlet of the river. A British force was pushed on to the Wadi Hesi forthwith. They found the position held by a Turkish rearguard, but though the defence was resolute, the British crossed the river, established themselves on the north bank, and held it against several counter-attacks. At the same time British mounted troops advanced north along the Jaffa road. At Beit Hanun, the junction of the Jaffa route with that to Jerusalem, another Turkish rearguard had been posted. The fighting lasted here throughout the day. Coincidentally those of the enemy who had been holding the Atawineh and Baha groups of defences, evacuating them during the night of November 7, and finding the main route through Gaza cut, had retreated across country through Huj. Their rearguard stood there, and though this resistance was broken by an intrepid charge of the Worcester and Warwick Yeomanry who rounded up twelve of the enemy's guns, the main body were able to make good their escape. A mass of munitions, stores, and much of their artillery, however, had to be abandoned.

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From Huj the British pursuit was pressed towards El Meidel, Julis and Beit Duras ; it swerved, that is to say, laterally towards the coast so as to take the Turks retreating north in flank. On the other wing, in the meantime, the enemy had fallen back from Tel Kuweilfe by cross routes towards Hebron. The difficulties in the way of the British movements were now less the strength of the opposition encountered than the problems of supplies and of water. Already the British troops were most of them a good many miles from railhead, and in a country little favourable for transport. Water there was and enough, but it had to be drawn up from wells, and even where the means for drawing it had not been destroyed, as was frequently the case, rapid distribution was not easy. To neglect these problems would in the end have meant loss of time, and it was important, if the enemy was not to rally, that time should be saved.

Even on November 9 evidences were not lacking of a reaction. The larger part of the broken Turkish army was that retiring north. To relieve the pressure upon it the enemy was hurrying what reinforcements he could raise towards Hebron, and he made a counter-demonstration from that place. But General Allenby advisedly treated this apparent threat for what it was worth. He was aware that in the fighting round Tel Kuweilfe this smaller part of the Turkish army had suffered severely. He knew it to be short alike of supplies and of ammunition, and its hasty retirement over indifferent roads and through difficult country had contributed further to its disorganisation. Effective counter-attack from that quarter was therefore not immediately to be looked for. He contented himself accordingly on that side and for the present with blocking the outlets, and pressed the main pursuit.

The effort of the enemy was now to form a new line extending from Hebron north-west through Beit Jibrin on the main road from Gaza to Jerusalem, and by that means to link up with the coastal force.

This opposition rapidly stiffened. Indeed it soon

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became apparent that the enemy had determined to make a stand. British movements were slower than hitherto not merely because of the supplies problem, but because of the temperature. There had set in from the southern deserts a hot wind which rendered marches fatiguing.

At once to flank the British movement along the coast, and to cover the routes inland to Jerusalem, the enemy had from Beit Jibrin northwards taken up a position along the western edge of the highlands as far as El Kubab on the Jaffa-Jerusalem road. It was a strong position, for it barred the defiles.

But as a menace it failed. The British mounted troops moving along the coastal plain continued to press north. Already on November 11 they had reached Nahr Sukeirer at the outlet of the Mema river, thirty miles north of Gaza, and secured a bridgehead on the farther side, the Murreh hill.

It was the intention of General Allenby to attack the right of the hostile front near the Jaffa-Jerusalem road ; a bold decision, but one best calculated to embarrass and puzzle the enemy. If he moved the weight of his force to resist assault there, the Turkish General risked a rupture of his centre, and he had already experienced the peril of that manœuvre. It was not probable, therefore, that he would run the risk a second time.

The attack, entrusted to the 52nd Division, supported on their right by the mounted troops, took place on November 13. Both infantry and cavalry had to advance across a rolling plain. Walled, flat-roofed villages surrounded by plantations afforded points of support for the defence. But the advance of the Lowlanders was intrepid, and the cavalry rode forward with conspicuous dash. The enemy's positions were reached and cleared, two of the villages he held, Katrah and El Mughar, wrested from him, and his front broken. The horse pushed in, took 1,100 prisoners, 3 guns, and numerous machine-guns.

This success enabled the British, while the pursuit to the north went on, to push the remainder of the

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Turks east and frustrated their attempted conjunction. So far the effort to arrest the pursuit had broken down. The Turkish losses alike in artillery, munitions and other equipment and stores had been heavy. The 9,000 prisoners taken up to this time, and the enemy's casualties, though severe, might conceivably and possibly be made up. The disorganisation of equipment would take time, and much time, to repair. For the same reason as in Mesopotamia, even though it might not be to the same extent, the Turkish campaign in southern Syria had been seriously crippled.

One result of the victory of November 13 followed at once. On November 14 the British troops reached and captured the railway junction where the line from Gaza joined that from Jaffa. This was a vital link in the enemy's communications.

The pursuit north was pressed as well as the advance east. The cavalry reached Ramleh and Ludd, the former on the main road, the latter on the railway to Jaffa, and occupied both towns by the evening of November 15. By this move Jaffa had become undefendable. The port was occupied on November 16 without opposition.

This capture was important. In possession of Jaffa the British Expeditionary Force had a new and excellently situated base for oversea supplies. The main handicap of the campaign had been overcome.

No feature of the operations up to this time had been more remarkable than their rapidity. A fortnight only had elapsed since the attack upon Beersheba, but in that fortnight, besides the destruction of the enemy's fortified front, there had taken place, reckoning from the British lines before Gaza to Jaffa, an advance covering 75 miles of country. Farther inland the advance had covered forty miles, and that in spite of the trying conditions of the climate and some stiff fighting.

All the southern part of the coastal plain had been cleared. Save, however, its southern extremity, the enemy still kept his footing on the highland ridge; the question now was to wrest it from him.

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Advance from the plain through the minor defiles facing west was impracticable. The one break of any importance was that through which was carried the Jaffa-Jerusalem road, but even that defile was narrow and the enemy had not neglected to obstruct it.

Between Hebron and Jerusalem the backbone of the uplands rises to more than 3,000 feet above sea level. There is a fall to 2,363 feet where the main road from Jaffa to Jerusalem crosses what is to all intents a broad pass, but beyond this again to the north the chine rises, attaining at its highest point an elevation of nearly 2,900 feet. As this part of the chine, known as the Nebi Samwal ridge, ran parallel with the Jerusalem-Nablus road, and as it appeared necessary to strike that road at some point north of the Holy City in order to ensure evacuation of the country to the south, the ridge had to be seized.

A movement by the yeomanry from Ramleh through the hills eastward was begun on November 17. Following secondary routes, they reached Shilta. There is a track from that place over the mountains, but it proved impassable for wheeled traffic. The move covered the flank of the advance through the main defile. The opposite flank to the south was similarly covered by an advance of the Australian Light Horse.

On November 19 the infantry set out. The opposition met with was from Turkish rearguards. By the end of that day the main defile had been cleared as far east as Saris, at the western foot of the pass, where the elevation is 2,000 feet. Saris had been defended with some obstinacy. To the summit of the pass from that point, reached by a zigzag road, is about two miles. The enemy was prepared to dispute the passage. The summit is marked by the village of Kuryet-el-Enab, which he had organised for defence.

Early on November 20 the British troops resumed their attack. It was aided by an offensive movement along a secondary and nearly parallel road some miles to the north. Working up the declivity the troops drove the Turks out of Kuryet-el-Enab with the bayonet.

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The attack to the north carried the village of Beit Dukka, and gained there a footing on the chine. To clear it the troops moved from Kuryet-el-Enab along the line of the backbone northwards. By nightfall the whole Nebi Samwal ridge had been won.

The yeomanry were now thrown forward to the east of the rise, but the enemy was plainly determined to keep the Nablus road open. He had received reinforcements, was well provided with artillery, and strong in machine-guns, and it was evident that a powerful effort would have to be made to dislodge him. Indeed, the first use made of his reinforcements had been to launch two counter-attacks with the object of recovering the chine. Owing to difficulties of transport, the British had at this time only a very limited artillery support. The counter-attacks were beaten, but until the guns could be brought forward, a further advance, it was manifest, could not be essayed. All that could be done in the meantime was to consolidate the positions gained.

Nevertheless, the rapidity of the British movements had realised results which General Allenby justly described as invaluable. They had penetrated the defiles before the enemy had had the opportunity to render them impassable. "The narrow passes from the plain to the plateau of the Judean range," General Allenby observed, "have seldom been forced, and have been fatal to many invading armies. Had the attempt not been made at once, or had it been pressed with less determination, the enemy would have had time to organise his defence in the passes, and the conquest of the plateau would then have been slow, costly, and precarious. As it was, positions had been won from which the final attack could be prepared and delivered with good prospects of success."

The enemy now resorted to the tactic of harassing local counter-attacks, carried out as far as possible by surprise. His chief efforts were still directed against the Nebi Samwal ridge. In these he incurred serious losses. The attacks proved consistently unsuccessful.

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During this interval—the later part of November and the first days of December—the British were busy improving roads and tracks, and in moving forward supplies and guns.

The plan of the renewed operations was to combine the attack west of Jerusalem with an advance from the south through Hebron. Apparently on the part of the enemy the latter development, in effect a turning movement, had not been looked for on account of the rugged character of the country.

The column detailed for the purpose—the 53rd (Welsh) Division, and a regiment of cavalry—moved out from Beersheba on December 4. By nightfall on December 6 their vanguard, after an extraordinarily rugged and toilsome march, was ten miles north of Hebron, and some six miles distant from Jerusalem. The general combined attack had been fixed for the 8th, and the column from the south, having passed Bethlehem on the 7th, was intended to co-operate from positions three miles south of Jerusalem.

On December 7, however, the weather had broken. Rain fell heavily, veiling the whole of the uplands in mist, and so far obscuring the roads that movement, and especially the movement of supplies, became next to and in some instances quite impracticable. The southern column was in consequence delayed.

But the western attack had achieved results of considerable importance. Difficult as the conditions were the troops advanced over hilly country some four miles, captured the Turkish defences both west of Jerusalem and north of the city, and carried the front forward to within one and a half miles of its western walls.

Next morning (December 9) continuing the attack, London troops and the yeomanry fought their way north of Jerusalem across the Nablus road. At the same time the southern column moving round the city to the east, got astride the main road to Jericho. The Turkish garrison in Jerusalem was thus isolated. At noon a *parlementaire* appeared with a white flag.

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The garrison laid down their arms. General Allenby made his official entry on December 11.

From the political viewpoint the British occupation of Jerusalem was an event of first class importance. But from a military point of view it should not be forgotten that the prestige of the Turks throughout the Near East has always been essentially that of arms. By the events of this signally brilliant campaign that prestige had been brought to a point beyond precedent low. Through defeat the vitality of a military dominion is irreparably impaired. Here was revealed the radical mistake of German "penetration." It had left the Turkish Empire unable to stand alone, yet had afforded no substitute efficient to sustain the Empire against attack.

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